

TWO LETTERS

ON

APOSTOLICAL EPISCOPAL SUCCESSION,

AND

TRADITION.

BY

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LETTER I.

ON

APOSTOLICAL EPISCOPAL SUCCESSION.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Letters are published rather more by constraint than willingly. That which is second in order, though first in date, (having been written in the year 1839,) has been printed before, but it was for private circulation only, and I have been repeatedly urged to give it greater publicity.

Had the observations on episcopal succession appeared alone, it should have been in such a form as would have enabled me to ask for them the countenance of the Right Reverend the Bishop of Chichester; and have thus afforded me the opportunity of expressing myself towards his Lordship in terms of cherished and grateful esteem, while I indulged a hope that the general tenor of the argument would be approved by him, as embracing a subject of general interest and legitimate discussion. It is hardly necessary to add, that I should even then have had no right to claim his Lordship's approval of any part of what these pages contain, and for which I am alone responsible.

They make no pretensions to originality, and contain little that may not, in substance at least, be found elsewhere; my object being only to supply, in a condensed form, what appears to be a plain and correct view of a subject that is acquiring importance very disproportionate, I think, to its real value.

To avoid the possibility of mistake, however unimportant such a mistake might be, I desire to express my hope that nothing may be found in the following pages to indicate an undervaluing of episcopacy, as being now beyond comparison preferable to any other form of ecclesiastical polity; or of the Church of England itself as a blessing to the dominions in which it is established. All that I desire to combat is the alleged necessity of Apostolical Succession to that Episcopacy, leading as it does to an undue exaltation of the priesthood, and to the evils that follow in its train; among which it is not the least, that it brings discomfort and discouragement to many who, in humility and sincerity of heart, are seeking the way of God's salvation as revealed in His word.

The hedge of the vineyard is not broken down by any obstruction being thrown in the way of those who are engaged in building a wall with untempered mortar.

A LETTER, &c.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE claim of episcopal apostolical succession, as now advanced, is similar to that of tradition, and is in close connexion with it,—the attempt in each instance being the same—viz. to establish an authority independent of, if not superior to, the word of God.

As the distinction to be taken in the one case is between the *authority* and *worth* of tradition, so in the other it is between the *necessity* and the *benefit* of a *ministerial* (*episcopal*) succession.

The claim advanced is to this effect,—viz. that our Lord, as head of his church and kingdom upon earth, appointed twelve apostles, giving to them power and authority to ordain successors. That from their time to the present there have been three orders of ministers, viz. bishops, priests and deacons, which therefore are necessary to the constitution of a christian church. That our Lord instituted sacraments, which, as

his appointment, are necessary to salvation. That to be effectually received they must be validly administered ; and that it is essential to their valid administration, that it be by the hands of a minister duly ordained in the line of apostolical episcopal succession.

The foundation of this claim must be laid in Scripture. 1st, Either on an express appointment, by our Lord or his apostles, of this particular system of church government ; or 2ndly, by a general delegation of authority to the church in every age, through or by the apostles, by virtue of which the authority of the Church is that of Christ himself ; or 3rdly, the practice of the apostles so clearly ascertained, and under such circumstances, as to make it binding in all after time.

That such a position and claim as the present, involving such fearful consequences, should have been left in any doubt by our Lord and his apostles, is impossible.

We must bear in mind throughout, that the question is not of *ministerial* but *prelatical* succession : and again, that the *lawfulness* or *expediency* of the episcopal model is not at issue, but its *necessity*.

Now, in the first place, it is not, and it cannot be, denied, that there is no express injunction in sacred Scripture by our Lord or his apostles as

to any system of church government. There is no passage in the New Testament which so treats of ecclesiastical government as if the Holy Spirit had intended to describe any one form of polity as being to remain everywhere and for ever inviolate. Nothing seems to have been further from the design of the sacred writers, than to prescribe any rule on the subject, or lead us to imagine that any such form of polity was necessary.

It may hence be reasonably inferred, that it was intended thus to teach us to distinguish between what is essential to the christian religion, viz. principles to be implanted ; doctrines to be believed ; duties to be practised ; unchangeable and perpetual: and what is comparatively circumstantial ; regarding external order and discipline, which, as matter of expedience, may alter with circumstances, and might be and has been left, therefore, to the adjustment of human prudence : that which was intended for every age and condition of man, to be the associate and guardian of every form of civil government, having thus the means of accommodating its external and earthly shape to the various modifications of human polity.

This being so—at all events the fact being certain, that neither our Lord nor his apostles have left any express and positive ordinance for the administration of the church—one is startled at

the proposition, that the salvation proffered in the Gospel is conditional on what is neither expressly enjoined in the Gospel, nor explicitly declared by it, nor even to be plainly inferred from it.

Again ; one is alarmed at the length to which will be extended the condemnation of those who will be found to have erred in this matter ignorantly and innocently ; that is, undesignedly.

Yet again ; one is alarmed at the difficulties that beset our path, and the entire uncertainty which must attend our whole course. For how am I to trace the pedigree of my own safety ? Salvation will now be made to depend, not merely upon anything to be believed or done ; not on faith or practice, the obedience of the heart and life ; but, also, on a matter of fact, the proof of which lies altogether beyond the reach of those to whom our Lord declared, in confirmation of his mission, that the Gospel was preached.

Everything becomes inverted ; for in exact proportion to a man's anxious concern for salvation, will be his uncertainty respecting it. It may be sufficient for the thoughtless and indolent to rest in the persuasion, that the church into which he has been baptized is the true church, and that the minister by whom he was baptized was duly ordained : but it may be that the persuasion is erroneous ; and the issue is far too momentous to be left in doubt by any one in his right mind.

It is easy to suggest a hundred difficulties, not of mere idle casuistry, but of a plain practical solid character, which can never be satisfactorily determined; yet, till they are, how must the mind be harassed! And is not this to make sad whom God hath not made sad? Upon the principle under consideration, we have this difficulty and inconsistency to contend with at starting: viz., that although the right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures be denied in favour of the church, it must in the first instance be exercised upon the church itself: since each must judge for himself how far the Church of England was justified in separating from that of Rome, and he therefore can be safe in her communion: thus setting himself up as a judge of her who is to control his faith and direct his steps.

To take one subject of inquiry out of many, viz. the question whether a seceding body carries with it the rights and privileges of the mother church.

The pope is the acknowledged head of the Church of Rome, and was so acknowledged to be in England. It is impossible to say that that church is now constituted in all respects, if in any, after the apostolical model; and if the apostolical form be strictly binding on all ages and countries, she and we must be wrong in many ways.

But if the right of self-government exist in *the* church, so that whatever form it may establish or assume is of essential authority, we must be wrong in having separated from the Church of Rome; and if so, how can we be a true church? So the Roman Catholics plead; and unanswerably upon their principles.

Suppose a portion of a church to break off from the main body, (numbers only cannot make an essential difference, whether it be a whole nation or a more limited part,) by reason of alleged impurity in doctrine, or erroneous practice, or defective discipline: does the seceding body carry with it all the essentials of a true church? Suppose that seceding body, whether more or less numerous, be itself in error in these respects—how then?

And do the same consequences attach to errors in discipline as in doctrine? Suppose it not only to secede, but to be cut off by the act of the parent church—how then? Are the ordinations and other acts of a bishop so excommunicated, and the acts of deposed ministers, valid? or does this depend upon whether the error lay with the parent church or the seceding body?

How again if they should be declared never to have had the right they have exercised?

Suppose the error be such as to involve an absolute denial of Christ, and a rejection of him

altogether—how then? Suppose a seceding bishop to ordain ministers of heresy, would they be ministers of the true church, so that the administration of the sacraments by them would be valid? Or suppose them to reject the sacraments altogether, how would it then be with the people who follow them, and who have no right to do aught but follow?

The same or similar questions may be put with reference to discipline and church government. There is no end to the difficulties that arise, and have arisen, as all those have done that are now suggested. But take the Scriptures for our guide, and the difficulties cease.

There is a passage in the beginning of Matt. xxiii. 4, which seems to be of weight as applied to this. “The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not.” The meaning is plainly to this effect: to what they teach out of the writings of Moses be obedient, for it is the word of God. Attend to them no further.

But, to return—To the law and to the testimony.

The claim now under consideration is opposed to the plainest declarations of sacred Scripture, both of our Lord and his apostles, by whom sal-

vation is rested on other grounds in terms most unequivocal ; not depending on inference, or matters of nice disquisition or difficult research ; but on plain, obvious, intelligible, practical, and moral grounds. I will refer to a few, first citing two or three texts by way of motto.

Add thou not unto his word, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.—Prov. xxx. 6.

I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book ; if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.—Rev. xx. 18, 19.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For *my* yoke is easy, and *my* burthen is light.—Matt. xi. 25, 28, 29, 30.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.—Matt. xxii. 37—40.

See also Matt. xxv. 31—46.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.—Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day : and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.—Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life . . . This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil . . . He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.—John iii. 14, 15, 19, 36.

The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.—John iv. 23, 24.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.—John xi. 25, 26.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, and thy house.—Acts xvi. 29, 30, 31.

I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.—Acts xx. 20, 21.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. v. 1.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—Rom. viii. 1.

What saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—Rom. x. 8, 9.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. . . . Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, &c.; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.—Gal. v. 16, *et seq.*

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.—Tit. ii. 11, 12.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.—James i. 27.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faith-

ful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—1 John, i. 5—9.

These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.—Rev. vii. 14, 15.

It is equally opposed to every fair inference, arising from other parts of Scripture. The very reverse of what is thus contended for is to be inferred from the history of the healing of the ten lepers, of whom nine were Jews, members of the then established church; the other a Samaritan. All were healed alike, but the Samaritan only was declared by our Lord to be saved, for he only had faith and gratitude.

See also Mark ix. 38—41.

John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part.

Again, Phil. i. 15—18.

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will; the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached: and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

If discipline were the one thing needful, the success of any preaching but that of authorized men would have been a subject of lamentation to the apostle. But to him doctrine was more valuable than fellowship, though it be otherwise now.

The question has been asked, but never yet answered, who ordained Apollos? See Acts xviii. 24, 25, 26. Also 1 Cor. iii. 5—7.

A certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.

Now then as to the fact itself.

1. The alleged appointment.
2. The asserted historical proof.
3. The present conformity of the church to the original pattern.

I have said, and I repeat it, that there is no express injunction in Scripture by our Lord or his apostles relative to any system of

church government : and if so, then it may reasonably be inferred that it was left to adjust and accommodate itself to the varied and varying circumstances of the world, and of the visible church ; it being obvious that this would be convenient at least, if not unavoidable. In fact, the condition of the church itself would require it, as it passed from its earliest state to one of an advanced and established character ; from a state of oppression to one of exaltation and national establishment. The changes in the world wrought by Christianity itself rendered it indispensable.

This is illustrated at once by our own church, the head of which is the reigning monarch : and though this may not affect the orders of priesthood or ministry, it is clearly an altered character of the church as a body.

Error seduces in the guise of truth. It follows, therefore, that it is by a perversion of what is true, rather than by the assertion of what is nakedly false, that error is introduced.

The apostolate was an extraordinary office ; in its nature temporary, and not admitting of succession. The indispensable requisites in an apostle demonstrate this ; for,

1st. They were to be eye-witnesses of the resurrection. It was necessary that an apostle

should have seen Christ in the flesh, and have seen him after he rose from the dead.

Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.—Acts i. 22.

The place of Judas was supplied, therefore, for this special purpose; and the apostle Peter makes mention of this subsequently.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.—Acts ii. 32.

And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.—Acts iii. 15.

And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.—Acts v. 32.

Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.—Acts x. 40, 41.

For this reason Matthias was chosen in the place of Judas; but this was before they entered on their charge. Never afterwards on the death of an apostle was another substituted. James was put to death by Herod, but no mention is made of a successor.

2ndly. They had prerogatives which were peculiar and personal. They were endued with power from on high, without the intervention of any human ordination or appointment. They

had the power of conferring the miraculous gifts of the Spirit by the laying on of hands. They knew by inspiration the whole doctrine of Christ. And it is observable, that St. Paul takes great pains to assert his equality with them in these respects.

That he also was an eye-witness of the resurrection,

Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are ye not my work in the Lord?—1 Cor. ix. 1.

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.—1 Cor. xv. 8.

That he received his commission in like manner,

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.) But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ... But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.—Gal. i. 1, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17.

And to his conferring miraculous powers,

I am become a fool in glorying: ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing

am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds—
2 Cor. xii. 11, 12.

3rdly. The mission of the apostles was quite different from that of an ordinary pastor. Go teach all nations—go into all the world, was their mission. The earth was their charge. They had the world in common, and were colleagues one of another in its conversion to the faith of the Gospel.

Were this not so, it would be remarkable that little is known of the acts and personal history of the twelve apostles, except Peter and John, the death of James being recorded. Their history is lost; there is little even of traditional supposition; scarcely a trace of any direct descent from either of them. Of the proof of that which is alleged from St. Peter, we shall have something to say presently.

The apostle Paul received his commission specially from Heaven; so that he and all that descend from him are exceptions to the statement that to the twelve apostles was committed by our Lord the government of his church in perpetuity.

Few are supposed to have survived Peter and Paul; but John did: so that nothing arises from survivorship.

But with the extraordinary privileges and prerogatives possessed by the apostles, see in what terms they write of themselves with reference to the disciples, i. e. the church.

The first passage is of some length, but I quote it all, as well for its beauty, as its importance in every part of the present inquiry.

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church. And when they were come to him he said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house; testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And, now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his

own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts xx. 17, 35.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—Rom. xii. 1.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.—2 Cor. iv. 5.

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.—2 Cor. i. 24.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead... Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.—2 Cor. v. 14, 20.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.—1 Peter v. 1.

We come then now to the orders or degrees mentioned in sacred Scripture, apart from the apostolical office.

Reserving for distinct consideration the peculiar case of Timothy and Titus, on which I shall offer some remarks presently, they are, with that exception, unquestionably but two, viz. presbyters and deacons ; and looking to the original appointment and office of deacons, it may fairly be doubted whether they were more than laymen, although bearing office in the church.

Their original appointment, with the reason for it, is recorded in the beginning of the Acts. vi. 1—4.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said : It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.—Acts vi. 1—4.

The deacon, in our church, has no sort of charge in that particular, which at first was his whole charge. The name is retained, but that is all. The office is quite distinct.

It may be observed, too, as we pass on, with regard to those who stand out for a rigid adherence to apostolical forms, that the office of dea-

coness, which certainly then existed, Rom. xvi. 1, is now entirely abolished.

But to return to the consideration of the higher order.

I suppose it will not now be said, whatever distinction there may have been in the duties attaching to the office of elders and that of bishops, that they were originally two classes of ministers.

And again : That the terms Bishop and Presbyter are used promiscuously in the New Testament, no one can well deny. Yet to put the matter beyond doubt, see Acts xx. 17, quoted above. St. Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, to call the *Elders* of the Church. In the Greek the word is *presbyters*. Addressing them he says, v. 18, "Take heed to the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*"—in the Greek, *bishops*. See also Tit. i. 5, "and ordain *elders* (in the Greek *presbyters*) in every city." If any be blameless, ver. 6, &c., for, ver. 7, "a *bishop* must be blameless." The elder in the 5th verse, and the bishop in the 7th, must mean the same.

So in Peter, 1st Epist. v. 1. "The *elders* which are among you, (in the Greek *presbyters*,) I exhort," &c., "taking the *oversight* thereof;" in the Greek the word signifies discharging the office of a bishop, or overseeing.

St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, chap. iii.

mentions bishops and deacons only. So in the opening of his epistle to the Philippians : “ To all the saints in Christ Jesus, with the bishops and deacons,” recognizing as before the ministry of the *Word* and of *Tables*.

In like manner in Acts xv., when Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to consult the church, “ they were received,” it is said, “ of the church and of the apostles and elders”—see ver. 4. Then in ver. 6, “ the apostles and elders came together to consider of the matter;” and ver. 22, “ it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church,” to do so and so ; and accordingly in ver. 23, letters were written after this manner : “ The Apostles and Elders and Brethren send greeting,” &c.

The word Bishop occurs five times in the New Testament ; always having reference to the oversight of the *people*, not of ministers.

Mention is seldom made of Ordination in Scripture, and most of the instances in which it is referred to have no bearing on the present question. As, for instance, that of the apostles by our Lord, and the election of a successor to Judas, are beside the point. In like manner, the communication of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and again the ordination of deacons, are nothing to the purpose.

The separation of Paul and Barnabas for the

work to which they were specially called by the Holy Ghost, was no new ordination ; for they had both been long engaged in the work of the ministry before : and St. Paul expressly disowns human appointment to his office. It was in fact not a new appointment, but an appointment to a new work ; though, whatever may have been its object, as it was by the hands of the *disciples*, i. e. prophets and teachers, at Antioch, it will not help forward the cause of prelatical ordination and succession.

The ordination of Timothy is referred by St. Paul to the presbytery, and the passage in the Acts xiv. 23, where Paul and Barnabas are said to have ordained elders in every church, would be, were it required, an additional proof that elders, or bishops, were the ministers of the church, and were ordained as such by the apostles.

Without going into a minute examination of the several passages in which reference is made in sacred Scripture (incidentally for the most part) to ordination of any kind, or for any purpose ; the result is, that the ordination or appointment of bishops as a superior order is incapable of proof from the Scriptures.

It is observable, that while so little mention is made in Scripture of ordination ; preaching the Gospel is, throughout the New Testament,

exhibited as the great duty and privilege of the christian minister—his chief, most useful, most honourable destination. References are needless ; but a single observation may be allowed on the earlier verses of the eighth chapter of the Acts, (ver. 1,) where we read that, owing to the great persecution of the church which followed the death of Stephen, all, but the apostles, were scattered abroad throughout Judea and Samaria ; and (ver. 4,) they who were so scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Were all these ordained ?

The next point is Jurisdiction. Originally, if we can learn anything from Scripture, we see that the bishops, presbyters, elders—by whatever name called—belonged to every church alike ;—they were the ministers, as we have seen at Ephesus, and in every city. See also James v. 14.

Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, &c.

When they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, &c.—Acts xiv. 23.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every church as I had appointed thee.—Titus i. 5.

In a note subjoined to the epistle, Titus, to whom it is addressed, is called the first bishop of the Cretians, and Timothy, in like manner,

is called bishop of Ephesus. But these *postscripts* are of no authority ; and the whole history of the Acts of the Apostles, and indeed the language of these very epistles proves, that they, like the other of St. Paul's fellow-travellers, (properly speaking, evangelists,) had no settled place of abode, no fixed station ; but assisted him in settling the churches, and in the accomplishment of any special object which the apostle had in view, and to which he could not personally attend. Thus Titus was left in Crete for a specific purpose, which being accomplished, he was to meet the apostle in Macedonia. St. Paul afterwards tells Timothy that Titus was gone to Dalmatia ; and, in like manner, he directs Timothy to use despatch in Asia, that he might come to him at Rome. It is clear that their office, like that of the apostles, was extraordinary. If otherwise, it is marvellous that the apostle should have omitted all allusion to their particular duties as established heads of churches, and the appointment of others in their absence, and as their successors.

When the Epistle to the Romans was written, Timothy, whom the apostle calls his fellow-labourer, was with St. Paul at Corinth. (xvi. 21.)

The First Epistle to the Corinthians was sent by Titus, and Timothy is spoken of in it as likely to be at Corinth. (xvi. 10.)

In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, from

Macedonia, by Titus, Timothy is joined with the apostle, and was therefore then with him.

Neither Timothy nor Titus is named in the Epistle to the Galatians.

The Epistle to the Ephesians was written from Rome, (whether A.D. 61 or 64,) after the time when Timothy is alleged to have been made Bishop of Ephesus ; yet he is not named in it, nor is there any allusion in it to any head of the church there, but only to "the saints and faithful brethren."

In the year 62, St. Paul tells the Philippians (ii. 19,) that he hopes to send Timothy to them shortly, who, he says, as a son with a father, had served with him in the Gospel.

When the Epistle to the Colossians was written, (62,) Timothy, who is joined in the salutation, was with St. Paul at Rome. So, in like manner, he is joined with him in both the Epistles to the Thessalonians, written from Corinth, where, of course, he then was.

The expression, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia," in the First Epistle to Timothy himself, (i. 3,) seems to mark but a temporary purpose, and to bear little similitude to a settled appointment and establishment of him as head of the church there, i. e. bishop in the modern acceptance of the term, resembling rather his previous mission to Thessalonica, referred to in the Epistle to the

Thessalonians, (iii. 2.) ;—and this is confirmed by the undoubted fact, that when the second epistle to him was written, not only was Timothy not in his supposed diocese at Ephesus, but the apostle tells him that he had sent Tychicus there, who is spoken of by the apostle as being in like manner a fellow-servant, beloved brother, and fellow-minister of the Lord, (Ephes. vi. 21,) as Timothy himself was. This we know to have been shortly before the death of the apostle. Titus was then gone to Dalmatia, and this was after he had been left in Crete, which appears to have been for a temporary purpose also.

When the Epistle to Philemon was written, in 62, Timothy was with the apostle ; and when St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews from Italy, Timothy was expected by him shortly.

So that he could scarcely ever have been in his supposed diocese at all.

There was no allusion to him by the apostle when addressing the elders at Miletus, as before mentioned.

From all this there really seems to be no scriptural foundation for considering either Timothy or Titus as the established Bishop of Ephesus or Crete : and there is small encouragement to pursue the inquiry among less authentic records, when I find it stated by Dr. Whitby, who was a zealous advocate for episcopacy, that he could

find *nothing in any writer of the first three centuries* concerning the episcopate of Timothy and Titus, nor any intimation that they bore that name; though it is often said to be proved by *all antiquity* that Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, —and Titus of Crete—(*dolus latet in generalibus.*)

Why there should be any dispute on the subject, I do not really understand; when the apostle himself, just before his own death, gives to Timothy (2 Ep. iv. 5) his true designation of evangelist; by which, according to Beausobre, (a man of profound erudition,) as quoted by Mant and d'Oyly on the eighth verse of the twenty-first chapter of the Acts, is meant “a person who, being attached to no particular church, was sent by the apostles, as was necessary, either for the purpose of founding new churches, or of confirming those which were already established.”

I must notice two other arguments that have from time to time been urged in support of the scheme under consideration.

The epistles to the churches in the early part of the Revelation of St. John were addressed to the angels of those churches, which, it is said, must mean the bishops.

To this there are several objections.

1. A figurative expression, employed without reference to any such subject as the government of the Church, can never be relied upon for such

a purpose. The allusion is by much too obscure.

2. The change of number from the singular to the plural is inconsistent with the suggested interpretation.

3. It is opposed to the fact that the church at Ephesus was, as we know, under the government of elders, as we learn from Acts xx. And if it be asked, might not a bishop have been appointed subsequently to the date of the transactions spoken of in the Acts (xx.), the answer would be, that the term angel is adopted from Jewish phraseology and the practice of the synagogue, which had also its elders or overseers, among whom one usually presided, who was called the angel of the congregation.

4. I do not see why, as the members of a church were represented in each instance by a single candlestick, the ministers of each might not be represented by a single angel. But however this may be; the passage, whatever construction be put upon it, is altogether remote from the question of succession, with which it has nothing to do; unless in so far as in the removal of the church was involved the extinction of all alike—both rulers and people.

It has been urged that there must be, under the Gospel, the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, to correspond with the high priest, priests, and levites, among the Jews under the

Mosaic dispensation ; and then it is sought to apply the words of the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “ No man taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”

This is both fallacious and mischievous. There is no authority or foundation for the analogy. The distinction in the ministerial character and office corresponds with the dispensation. The high priest, under the law, was ordained *for men in things pertaining to God*, that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin. The ministers of the Gospel are ambassadors from God in Christ, by whom is committed to them the ministry of reconciliation, as though God did by them beseech the world to be reconciled to him. He is, therefore, ordained *for God in things pertaining to men*.

“ I marvel,” says the apostle to the Galatians, “ that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel—which is not another ; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. . . . Are ye so foolish ? Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ? . . . I would they were even cut off that trouble you.”

Before we take leave of Scripture, and the light to be derived from it as to the nature

and constitution of the Church of Christ in the apostolic age, it may be expedient just to refer to what was the main object of the apostles, and how it was sought by them to attain it. This was the conversion of the world from idolatry and sin to the worship and service of God, as reconciling that world unto himself by Jesus Christ. They preached, therefore, Christ, and him crucified. This was the great subject of their ministry, and they desired to know nothing in comparison with it.

All else, as this itself also, was but a means to an end. How little is there of allusion to that ministerial authority, on which, in after times, and times of less simplicity, so much stress has been laid, and which is now made so peculiarly prominent, as if it were the one thing needful !

Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk.—Acts iii. 12.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.—Acts v. 42.

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.—Acts ix. 20.

Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.—Acts xiii. 38.

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.—Acts xvi. 31.

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.—Acts xvii. 18.

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—Rom. x. 8, 9.

We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.—1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—1 Cor. ii. 2.

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.—2 Cor. iv. 5.

The ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.—2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.—Eph. ii. 20, 21.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—Eph. iii. 8.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.—Philip. iii. 8.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—Col. iii. 1.

I readily acknowledge the difference between sermons to unbelievers and epistles to churches—the means of converting sinners being one thing, and the binding together and building up of believers another. But even in the Epistles, where so much is said of unity, &c., ministerial authority and discipline are not the means urged for its promotion ;—still less is ministerial succession mainly urged, which is the point now at issue.

It is no part of my plan to trace the origin or course of departure from the system of church government in the apostolical times, as it lies before us in all its simplicity : and if I trace its outline faintly and rapidly, it is only that I may not appear wilfully to omit what in any degree belongs historically to that which is in some measure an historical subject.

I admit—indeed, as the lawyers say, it is a part of my case—that some change was unavoidable ; and I see nothing in the present constitution of the Church of England that is inconsistent with the *principle* of the apostles. But to say that they are identical, is a mere abuse

of words. Still less is it to be heard say, without some impatience, that there is safety in her communion only as she has descended from the apostles, through all the changes and abominations that have intervened.

We have seen that one object which the apostle Paul had in view was, to provide ministers for the churches which he had planted.

When converts were made by the preaching of the Word, they met as a congregation. Thus we read in the Epistle to the Romans, (last chapter,) of the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. When a congregation had become sufficiently numerous for the purpose, at the first convenient opportunity, ministers, no doubt, were appointed for their instruction and guidance; for the conduct of their worship, and to regulate their almsgiving: but that even the apostles themselves followed a secular employment for their livelihood is clear, for St. Paul was by occupation a tent-maker: and that in those days some of the churches to which the epistles of that apostle were addressed had no fixed ministers, is to be inferred from the tenor of those epistles, especially at Corinth. That some things were conducted in common by pastors, deacons, and congregations, is quite certain—the church is thus described and addressed; and that the deacons were at first chosen by the people, is evident from the account of their institu-

tion. The deaconship served as a noviciate for the ministry. When pastors had once been appointed to any church by the apostles as extraordinary ministers, ordinary means were sufficient for the future. As disciples increased in number, churches multiplied, for whom an increased supply of ministers was needed.

Then in the meetings or conferences that were held among the ministers or delegates of the different churches for the unity of faith, one was chosen to preside for the preservation of order. Precedence was naturally given to the more esteemed for learning, ability, gifts, or graces. Respect and submission were due to the office as well as the personal character ; and thus, by degrees, a difference of rank was introduced and established : hence sprang first the distinction of office ; then the separation of the order from the office ; and the title of bishop, which had been at first synonymous with presbyter or elder, became the designation of a superior order in the church. That this might be lawful and expedient I do not question ; but that it involved a change of a serious character from what had been the constitution of the church, or rather churches, in the time of the apostles, is past all doubt. Thus from being pastors of a particular flock, they became superintendents of many pastors ; till in process of time bishops were ordained at large without

any diocese at all. This, upon the plea that bishops are what the apostles were, would have been no abuse: yet was it deemed to be one, and of such a nature as to require the strong measure of correction which it received from the council at Chalcedon, whereby not only the practice was forbidden, but it was expressly declared that all such ordinations were absolutely null and void.

I shall have occasion to refer presently to what is nearly connected with this in immediate relation to the question of succession and its historical proof. It is said that during the first ages of the church, (and with a view more particularly to the Reformation,) for the first fifteen hundred years it is said, that such a thing was not known, and had not been heard of, as a church without a bishop. This, if true in words, is a fallacy in substance, and seems to be altogether beside the question. If understood in their original sense, they mean no more than that every church had its minister; and in any sense it was long before the office of bishop was so altered, as that he came to have the charge of several churches. By all primitive writers the bishop's charge is denominated invariably a church, a congregation, never in the plural, churches or congregations.

This change again might be expedient; no doubt it was, but still it was a change.

We speak now of the Church of England, the

Church of Scotland, the Greek Church, the Church of Rome, &c. But no such phraseology is to be found in Scripture. There we do not read of the Church of Asia or Macedonia; but of the churches in Asia, all the churches of the Gentiles, &c. : the plural number being used when more congregations than one are spoken of.

Avoiding further details, which are needless for our purpose, the result is; that subsequently to the time when the apostles were removed from the possibility of personal superintendence, a change in the system of church government ensued, to a certain extent necessary, to a greater, expedient; but it was ultimately of a character to affect the whole constitution of the church, and to make it imperative to separate from the communion, as well as to protest against the corruptions of that church, through which, if at all, episcopal succession has descended to us. The gradations were from

Congregational to parochial.

Parochial to diocesan.

Diocesan to provincial.

Provincial to patriarchal.

Patriarchal to pontifical.

I do not say that in any or all of these there was that which might not have been consistent with the doctrine and discipline of the church in the time of the apostles, whose model is still said

to be observed ; but in point of fact the spiritual character of the church became gradually intermixed with, and at last absorbed by, temporal power : so that no two things can be more dissimilar than the state of the christian churches under the charge of the apostles, and the church of Rome under the dominion of popes. And this most comprehensively ;—in doctrine, in discipline, in the number, order, and appointment of ministers ; pope, cardinals, bishops, canons, priests, &c. &c. In the loss of truth and the introduction of error ; the loss of all spirituality, purity, and simplicity ; and the multiplication of evils and corruptions, the very mention of which would hardly be endured : but one and all of which claim the support of those by whom the authority of the church and her inherent right of self-government is maintained. This it is which leads some among us to palliate all that has been done by the church of Rome ; and to deal so gently with her, that it is scarcely a matter of doubt whether in their estimation the danger that attends a denial of her supremacy in withdrawing from her government, be not greater than the peril of sharing her apostasy by continuing in her communion : exalting thus the means above the end, and magnifying the medium of vision till the object be lost.

I will just put down, as they occur to me, some

of the peculiarities of the church of Rome, begging that you will compare them with your own recollection of the simple tenor of the Gospel.

The sacrifice of the mass.

Transubstantiation.

Purgatory.

The sale of indulgences.

The forced celibacy of the clergy.

The worship of the Virgin Mary.

The adoration of images and relics.

The multiplication of ceremonies and sacraments.

Multiplication of masses for the repose of a soul, with a bull of consolidation.

The denial of the cup to the laity.

The withholding of the Scriptures from the laity.

The power of dethroning kings.

The not keeping faith with heretics.

The infallibility of the pope (as the successor of him whom the apostle Paul withstood to the face, because he was to be blamed :) with the usurped and abused power of the keys.

Worship in a dead language.

Works of supererogation.

Invocation of saints.

Monasteries and nunneries, with all their various orders, crowning the whole with that of Jesuits.

Auto-da-fès.

The denial of the great doctrine of justification by faith.

I need not increase the catalogue, which would be endless as it is frightful.

But as that which is more immediately connected with our present subject, I would refer to the authority of the priesthood as upheld in that church, compared with the language of those who received their commission from our Lord himself, were endued with power from on high, were eye-witnesses of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and journeyed through the world as he had come from glory, to seek and save the lost.

A few passages will suffice :

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—Rom. xii. 1.

None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.—1 Cor. viii. 13.

And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.—2 Cor. i. 6.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.—2 Cor. iii. 5.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed : feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.—1 Peter v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.—2 Pet. i. 12, 13, 14, 19.

The Epistles of St. John throughout.

Lastly, let us look at the conduct and language of the apostles Peter and John, as recorded in the 3d chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, after the miraculous healing of the beggar at the gate of the Temple.

“ Ye men of Israel, why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man whole ? ”

To what an almost infinite distance from the truth must the church of Rome have receded ; when we find her worshipping the images, the

relics, the very corruptions, of those men who, when they were alive to work a miracle, shrank from the gaze of the multitude, that Christ alone might have the glory !

The church of Rome denies salvation to all that are out of the pale of her communion. And from a church holding *that*, in connexion with all the error into which she has sunk (so low that the difficulty in finding a spark of life in her has at times been equalled only by her anxiety to tread it out wherever else it could be found,) it is now to be deemed a high privilege to descend.

Let us rejoice to have escaped from her.

Before I go to the next branch of the subject, let me refer to the earliest and best authorities after the apostles ; not as at all comparable with them, or adding any weight to them, or as regards *the* question at issue, which is the necessity of conformity to a church, the government of which is in prelatical descent from the apostles ; but simply as showing what was the practice of the earliest churches.

Clemens Romanus, or Clement, named in the Epistle to the Philippians, chap. iv. 3, expressly mentions two orders only, whom he calls Bishops (by the Greek word *presbyters*) and deacons : applying the last words of the 17th verse of 60th chapter of Isaiah thus :—I will constitute their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in

faith ; whether rightly or not, no matter. And throughout his Epistle there is not an allusion to any third office : on the contrary, all is plainly inconsistent with the existence of any such.

Polycarp, who had been a disciple of St. John, exhorts the people to be subject to their presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ. Could he have gone higher, or with any propriety, not to say decency, have used this similitude, had there been a higher order in the Church ? With him, as with Clement, there is not the slightest allusion to a bishop as a higher order ; but all is incompatible with it.

Presbyters and bishops, according to Origen, are substantially the same order ; the circumstantial difference being, that one presbyter was set over the rest, and distinguished by the denomination of bishop.

From Jerome we learn that a presbyter is the same as a bishop ; that originally the churches were governed by the common council of the presbyters ; and that the presbyters of Alexandria ordained their bishop for more than two hundred years from the first planting of that church. Again : “ Let the bishop know, he says, that they are greater than presbyters, rather by custom than by the real appointment of our Lord.” Tertullian, reciting the ordinances of public worship and the government of the church, says, “ In all

these doings certain approved elders preside." Irenæus declares that the succession, and together with it the episcopate also, had come down to his day, viz. the latter end of the second century, through a series of presbyters and bishops.

"It behoves us to hearken to those who are presbyters in the church, who as we have shown, says he, have their succession from the apostles."

Hilary says, The presbyters were at first called bishops, and

Theodoret, Of old they called the same men both bishops and presbyters.

The testimony of the Fathers therefore does not tend to prove that the distinction contended for is of apostolical origin. The first mention that is made of three orders is by Ignatius : but some of his Epistles, and there is especial reason to think it of these portions which are at variance with other parts of his writings, are confessedly spurious.

Before I proceed further, I would make a few observations with reference to the mode of appointing bishops. This in the earlier ages of the Church was unquestionably by election ; and that not followed by any ordination or form of consecration as of a distinct order in the church, which is comparatively a modern practice ; tending still to corroborate what has been established from sacred Scripture (if indeed what is so proved

can need or receive any confirmation,) that there was no institution by the apostles, and no example in their time, of the episcopate as a distinct and superior order of ministry.*

As it will naturally, and may fairly, be asked how the assertion is made good, that the election of bishops in the earlier ages of the church, when they were thus raised to a higher office, was not followed by any act of consecration as of a distinct and superior order, I add a little upon that head; the more willingly, because it is one of those points on which the whole question turns: for if the fact be so; whatever proof there may be of ministerial, there can be none of apostolical, succession, which alone is at issue.

The authorities already cited do, as it seems to me, inferentially at least and in effect establish the point: but a little enlargement if not repetition of what has been already referred to will be excused on this occasion, seeing that it is for a new purpose; and it is important to keep the points of discussion unmixed. The works of

* See the 36th of the Articles of our Church touching the ordination of bishops and archbishops and the ordering of priests. The archbishop being to bishops what the bishop then was to presbyters, and is perhaps, properly speaking, still.

Notwithstanding all that is said about episcopal ordination, no bishop of our church can admit any to priest's orders without the presence and aid of presbyters.

Hilary are bound up, having become accidentally mixed, with those of Ambrose, bishop of Milan ; but whichever may be the author of the commentary on St. Paul's Epistles, these are the words of one or the other, *Episcopi et presbyteri una ordinatio est*. The bishop and presbyter have one and the same ordination ; and in what then follows, the whole distinction of the episcopate is ascribed to seniority in the ministry, without indeed at first either election or special ordination—bishop meaning no more than first of presbyters. But the testimony of Jerome is so clear, and he is of such acknowledged authority, that I shall refer to him rather more at large.

In the passage before quoted, Jerome asserts unequivocally that presbyters and bishops were formerly the same. Then in order to show that this was not a private opinion, but was determined by Scripture, he in a cursory manner points out the argument arising from some of the passages in the New Testament already referred to. "These passages, he says, we have brought forward to show that, with the ancients, presbyters were the same as bishops. But that the roots of dissension might be plucked up, a usage gradually took place that the chief care should devolve upon one. Therefore, as the presbyters know that it is by the custom of the church that they are to be subject to him who is placed over them ; so let the

bishops know, that they are above presbyters rather by custom than by Divine appointment ; and that the church ought to be ruled in common."

In another part of his writings he says, " after the apostles' time one presbyter was placed over the rest as a remedy against schism : for, at Alexandria he adds, from the Evangelist Mark down to Heraclas and Dionysius, (about A.D. 250,) the presbyters always elected one from among themselves, and placed him in the highest chair, and gave him the name of bishop : in the same manner as an army may make its general ; or as deacons elect one of themselves, whose industry they know, and call him archdeacon."

It has been said that all this refers to the *election* of bishops exclusively, not at all negating their ordination or consecration. But this involves a threefold error, not to say perversion. For, 1st, it is opposed to the original position of St. Jerome, viz. that the order of bishop and presbyter was the same, which in that case they could not be. 2ndly. The argument from the Sacred Scriptures would be altogether beside the point. And 3rdly, the illustrations would be equally unfortunate and wide of the mark : since it is well known that an army chose its general by acclamation ; and that the election of an archdeacon was never followed by any distinct or new ordination : the

inference being inevitable, that there can be no essential difference between the order of bishop and that of presbyters; since to make a bishop, nothing more was necessary at first than the nomination of his fellow-presbyters, of which the practice of the church of Alexandria long remained an example. Thus the original proposition, the argument, and illustration, are in perfect harmony. But to say that the consecration of a bishop as one of superior order in the church; though how, or when, or by whom performed no one can suggest; is to be understood to have followed because it is necessary, is only to beg the question; for it is necessary to nothing but that assertion: it imputes to St. Jerome inconsistency, if not contradiction, and is an idle assumption, of which I remember not the like except in Dr. Gill's Commentary on the Acts; where, because maintaining the validity of adult baptism only, and that by immersion; he will first not allow the jailor of Philippi to have any children; and then suggests (if there were no baptistery in the prison) that the jailor, his household, and the apostles, must be understood to have all gone down to the river (if there were one) in the dead of the night, returning to the prison before the light of day.

In confirmation of what has been quoted from Jerome may be cited the testimony of Eutychius

or Eutyches, himself patriarch of Alexandria, who says that the twelve presbyters constituted by the Evangelist Mark upon the vacancy of the see did choose of their number one to be head over the rest, and the other eleven did lay their hands on him, and blessed him, and made him patriarch. That this is altogether incompatible with the notion that the episcopate was at that time a distinct and higher order in the church, need not be argued.

I am aware that in St. Jerome's time there existed generally, though by no means universally, this difference between the bishop and the presbyters, viz. that to the former was then confided the power of ordination. The transition from perfect equality to absolute superiority was not suddenly effected : it was the growth of time ; not of years, but of centuries ; the distinction of authority or office preceding that of order or degree in the church, and being introductory to it. With the former I have no concern, it being sufficient to show that as a distinct and superior order in the church, episcopacy, in the modern acceptation of the term, did not exist in the time of the apostles ; and that, however expedient and desirable such an institution might be, it cannot plead the sanction of apostolic appointment or example. It may be difficult to fix the period exactly when the episcopate was first re-

cognized as a distinct *order* in the church, and when the consecration of bishops, as such, came to be in general use. Clearly not, I think, when St. Jerome wrote. Thus much at least is certain, viz. that the government of each church, including the ordination of ministers, was at first in the hands of the presbytery : that when one of that body was raised to the office of president, and on whom the title of bishop was conferred, it was simply by the election (*co-optatio*) of the other presbyters, whose appointment was final, requiring no confirmation or consecration at the hands of any other prelates ; and that each church was essentially independent of every other.

If then all this be so, there seems to be an end to the question ; for under whatever circumstances the privilege of ordaining was afterwards committed to the bishop, he could of necessity receive no more than it was in their power to bestow, from whom he received it, who were co-ordinate presbyters, not superiors. At whatever period, therefore, it was adopted, and with whatever uniformity it might be continued, and whatever of value or even authority it might hence acquire ; still as an apostolical institution it has none : there is a gap which can never be filled ; or rather, the link by which the whole must be suspended is wanting, and can never be supplied. There can be no apostolical succession of that which had no

apostolical existence ; whereas the averment to be of any avail must be, not only that it existed in the time of the apostles, but was *so* appointed by them as that there can be no true church without it.

I have not multiplied authorities, because in my view of the subject they are of little worth. And indeed, were they of more value than they are, when a few names have been mentioned there is no more to be done. Later writers repose on the earlier, and the earliest and the best build, as Jerome does, on the authority of Scripture. For the practice of the church, and the gradations of the change that was continually in progress, reference may profitably be made to the writers of the several ages in which they lived ; but this is not the point at issue. And I cannot persuade myself to believe, that had episcopacy, in the modern acceptation of the term as a higher order in the ministry, been essentially necessary, or of apostolical authority ; it would have been committed to the frail bark of tradition only, without a clear testimony to it being recorded in the word of God.

The question has been asked—How, in the absence of episcopacy, could ministerial discipline have been provided for ?

1. To say that it could not by any other

means or mode of church government, if this be not enjoined in Scripture, is to imply, at least, a charge against Divine wisdom. To say that it must be understood to be enjoined because it is necessary, is only to exalt our wisdom at the expense of that which is divine.

2. Yet grant that it is not only expedient, but necessary for this purpose. Discipline is not that which requires a distinct order in the church. The Speaker of the House of Commons maintains all necessary and due authority in that assembly ; but he is nothing more than an individual member, raised by choice of the rest to a higher seat.

3. If a higher order in the ministry be requisite for the purpose in question, a still higher will be wanted for *their* control. And thus there must be a continually and perpetually ascending scale. An archbishop is confessedly not superior in order, though he is in degree, to the bishops. And why should not presbyters be governed as well on the same principle? The discipline of the church seems to have been left to the discretion of the church.

Entering upon the historical proof of the succession to which, as a matter of fact, I now pray a little attention, we find difficulties in our way at every step from the very commencement.

Dr. Hook indeed says, and he, as I suppose, speaks the language of all who advocate the same

cause, that there is not a bishop, priest, or deacon among us who cannot, if he please, trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul. The ambiguity of the expression shows the infirmity of the case. Does it mean that they are descended some from one and some from the other, or that all are from one or the other alike, but from which is uncertain ?

In conformity with this asseveration, and in ostensible proof of it, there may be seen a printed “series of bishops from the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul to the present primate of all England,” to all appearance as clear and satisfactory as that of the kings of England from the time of the Conquest to her present Majesty. Were the fact of the supposed succession all-important, as Dr. Hook and others, in common with the church of Rome, consider it to be ; I entertain no doubt that the good providence of God would have watched over and preserved the evidence of it. General assertions are easily made ; and, when made boldly, do sometimes by the generality and boldness ensure reception. But I know not how to believe that any man who knows what proof is, and what is the nature of the proof in the present case, would venture on such an assertion as this.

In the first place, it has been much questioned whether St. Peter was ever at Rome at all.

Without entering minutely into that controversy, or disputing the tradition that there he suffered martyrdom, it is not a little singular, considering the relation of the see of Rome to this eminent apostle, and with reference to all that is built upon it, that the fact itself should be so imperfectly established as to leave room for doubt.

None ever questioned St. Paul having been at Rome, or St. Peter at Antioch: for, independent of history and tradition, there is scriptural proof of the fact. It is remarkable that no mention should be made in Scripture of the fact of St. Peter having been ever at Rome. A considerable portion of the book of the Acts of the Apostles is occupied with an account of his labours, and down to a period subsequent to that at which his charge of the church in that city is said by the Romish legends to have begun: but there is no record of it, and no allusion to it.

It is still more remarkable that in the Epistles of St. Paul, not only is it not mentioned, but there is much that is inconsistent with the probability if not possibility of St. Peter being or having ever been in that city.

Let us attend a little to dates.

The Epistle to the Romans is supposed to have been written in the year 57, 58. That to the Colossians, from Rome about the year 62; and

the second Epistle to Timothy from the same place in 65, shortly before St. Paul suffered martyrdom, which he is supposed to have done in that or the following year.

St. Peter's second Epistle was written shortly before *he* suffered, and this he is supposed to have done in or about 65. At the close of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans there is a special enumeration of those, to whom he sends his salutation ; and it is incredible that he should have omitted St. Peter, had he then known him to be there.

Equally so is it, that when writing from Rome to the Colossians and to Timothy, not only should St. Peter have been forgotten by him if there ; but that he should have written as he did to Timothy, " Only Luke is with me ; at my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me."

There is still greater difficulty, if possible, arising from the tenour of the early part of the Epistle to the Romans, where he expresses his long-continued anxiety to see them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift. This is not the language in which St. Paul would have addressed a church that he knew to have been founded by and under the charge of another apostle. The only way in which an attempt can be made to reconcile all this with the belief that St. Peter was ever at Rome at all, is the sugges-

tion that he went there at the very close of life, very shortly before he suffered martyrdom. This is at best but a partial explanation, and unsatisfactory to any extent, however limited. But giving it full weight, there is an end to the scheme of his being the founder of the church there, or in any sense the first bishop of it, which is the point now at issue. It is quite certain, therefore, that the origin of the papal supremacy was the dignity of the see, and not that of its founder.

Let us now enquire a little as to his immediate successors. But it seems to be fated that we should meet with nothing but difficulty, and *that* from Scripture itself, as long as any light can be borrowed from that purest source, and its testimony can bear upon the subject. Linus is said to have been the *first* bishop of Rome, and to have been ordained by this apostle, or by St. Paul or both. Yet we find him mentioned by the latter at the close of the last epistle he ever wrote, without any mark of distinction beyond that of being named, and he is not the first named either. "Tubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren." He surely was not bishop of Rome then. In truth there is nothing but uncertainty attending the enquiry. I do not pretend to have searched the records of antiquity myself, and I am much less careful about what is to be proved from other

authority than to be found in the holy Scripture. I take the statements as I find them.

Irenæus is said to testify that Linus was made bishop of Rome by Paul and Peter ; after him Anacletus, and after him Clement.

Tertullian testifies that Clement was the first bishop of Rome after St. Peter.

Eusebius declares that Linus was the first bishop of Rome after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter. Again, that Peter was the first bishop of Antioch.

The popish legend, is that St. Peter sat at Rome for twenty-five years.

Epiphanius declares that both Paul and Peter were bishops of Rome ; Tertullian, Rufinus, and Epiphanius say that Clement succeeded Peter. Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustin say, in contradiction to their authority, that Linus succeeded Peter. But bishop Pearson seems to have established the fact that Linus died before Peter.

Cabasute, the learned popish historian of the councils, says, that it is a very doubtful question concerning Linus, Cletus, and Clement, as to which of them succeeded Peter.

The Apostolical Constitutions say, that Linus was the first bishop of Rome, and was ordained by St. Paul ; Clement the second, ordained after the death of Linus by St. Peter ; but these Con-

stitutions are proved to have been compiled not sooner than the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century. In fact, "the succession of the earliest bishops of Rome and the duration of their government are involved in inexplicable confusion;" and therefore one cannot but agree with Dr. Comber, a very learned divine of our own church, that there being no certainty as to who did succeed the apostles, the Romanists build upon an ill bottom when they lay so great weight on personal succession."

Difficulties of a similar kind attend us at every stage of the enquiry.

The catalogue contained in the Roman Pontifical is commonly referred to; and this conveniently enough to avoid the toil of investigation and all fear for the result. But that book has long since been proved to be of no authority; no sort of reliance can be placed upon it; and the personal succession of the early popes must be established upon other authority, or not at all.

But difficulties await us of another and more serious character; though, as a minute investigation or detail forms no part of my little plan, I shall content myself with a brief reference to them.

In the fourth century the Arians having the ascendancy, expelled the orthodox bishops: and thus the line of succession was broken, as is

admitted, I believe, by the Romanists themselves.

The elections of the bishops of Rome were, during a long period, the occasion of intrigue, and violence, and evil of every kind : so that even if the records of such elections were as clear as they are uncertain, there would be little satisfaction in tracing a spiritual descent through such a channel.

For about three hundred years, the popes were made upon the mandates of the emperors, not without opposition of various kinds ; and the history of those transactions is of such a character as to wear more fitly the clothing of a dead language than be translated into a living one. “*Inexpressibly horrible*” is the language of one who was a great champion of popery. Then, again, before the end of the fourteenth century, there had been no less than twenty schisms. There were at one time *four* pontiffs, who all denounced each other as usurpers ; and, to complete the degradation of the Roman see, the influence of female arts and charms was triumphantly exerted. The successors of St. Peter, as they are called, were nominated to his chair by women of infamous and abandoned lives ;—the names and scandals of Theodora and Marozia are distinguished in the ecclesiastical annals of the tenth century. The result is this :—

The early history of the bishops of Rome abounds in contradiction—the later records are in confusion—the elections were scenes of scandalous intrigue and bloodshed—the schisms were interminable.

As to their personal character—some were monsters in wickedness ; several were heretics ; others were deposed as usurpers, and all their acts declared to be nullities, including, as I believe, the ordination of bishops and archbishops of the Church of England.

It might be difficult to determine through which of them the powers in question descended to us ; but that any powers of a divine nature can have passed through hands so impure will be reluctantly admitted by any pious man ; for a fouler catalogue of crime than the records of the popedom supply has never been exhibited in the annals of human wickedness.

Is it possible to contend that the Church of Rome, with such ministers and so appointed—a church corrupt in every part and every particular,—individually and collectively—in doctrine, in discipline, in practice—is the representative of Jesus Christ, invested with all his authority, and exercising divine powers upon earth.

Ordination by heretical hands is an anomaly ; yet this is involved in the present system ; and

it can be sustained only by what was decided by the Council of Trent, viz. that though a bishop, priest, or deacon, turn heretic or schismatic, deist or atheist, he still retains the character; and though not a christian man, he is still a christian bishop, priest, or deacon—nay, though he be degraded from his office and excommunicated, he is, in respect of the character, still the same—though cut off from the church, he is still a minister of the church. In such a situation, to perform any of the sacred functions would be in him a deadly sin, but they would be equally valid as before. Thus he may not be within the pale of the church himself, and yet be in the church a minister of Jesus Christ. He may openly and solemnly blaspheme God, and abjure the faith of Christ; he may apostatize to Judaism, to Mahometism, or to Paganism—he still retains the character. He may become a priest of Jupiter, or a priest of Baal, and still continue a priest of Jesus Christ. The schoolmen carry it still further—but I forbear.

At the time of the Reformation, the church of Rome had become so corrupt as to render a continuance in her communion intolerable. I refrain from quotations upon this head;—it is rather with the fact of the separation itself than any justification of it, that I have to do, however much I may rejoice at it.

And what was the relation in which we then stood to the church of Rome. By a bull of the Pope, issued in the year 1535, this kingdom was placed under an interdict, and its subjects absolved from all allegiance : and by the Act of Convocation, which assembled in the following year, the authority of the Pope in this country was annulled. From that time to the present we have remained a separate church. But upon the principles of the advocates of episcopal succession, I must confess my inability to understand how this can be a true church, separated as a branch from the tree, having carried away and converted to its own use all that is essential to existence as such. If the church of Rome were, through so many centuries, the one true church in the line of apostolical succession, we surely had no right to abandon her. If, on the other hand, she were not so, but was indeed corrupt and abominable—not to employ the harder words which were then in use respecting her—I do not see that we necessarily derive life from her. How could our union with her be at one time essential, at another non-essential ? If it were in union with the head that we as a member lived, how can the same life continue to animate us as a distinct body when that union has ceased ? This, however, is for the consideration of those who hold the doctrine in question.

According to the system of church government in the time of the apostles, and especially to everything that we find in the sacred Scriptures, there is no difficulty in adhering to the church of England as a true church—a body of Christians in that unity which is derived from Christ, the head, through faith in his word, and the participation in his sacraments, having in her separation from the church of Rome rejected the errors which corrupted his doctrine, and the superstitions which polluted his worship.

Our church separated from that of Rome at the period of the Reformation, as other bodies of men in other countries had done before. Now, suppose a bishop of the church in England to have previously left her communion, would this have been schismatical in him and those by whom he was accompanied? Suppose that certain individuals, not under the pastoral charge of any bishop or priest, had anticipated the national separation, and come out from her, judging it wrong to continue in communion with error: were they wrong in doing that which was rightly done afterwards by the larger body? And did they peril their salvation by simply returning to the original practice of the apostles?

What Cranmer thought upon this subject will appear from his writings. Let two short passages suffice.

“ I doubt not to make it evident, that before these unhappy times the main ground for settling episcopal government in this nation was *not* accounted any pretence of divine right, but the conveniency of that form of church government to the state and condition of this church at the time of its reformation.”

And again :—

“ The bishop and priest were, at one time, not two things, but both one office, in the beginning of Christ’s religion.”

But there exists a document having the whole authority of the Convocation, for it is signed by Cromwell the king’s vicar general, the two archbishops, eleven bishops, and others, in which this same thing is expressly declared, viz. that the office of bishop and presbyter was originally one and the same.

I cannot resist the temptation to quote also one passage from Bisbop Jewell’s Defence of his Apology, in reply to Harding, which I do in spite of every attempt to disparage him and the church of which he was a defender, and to which his opponents themselves do still ostensibly belong.

“ Here, to weigh down the authority of God’s holy word, Mr. Harding hath brought in a heap of ordinary stale quarrels of the difference between priests and bishops, &c. His whole drift herein is to bear us in hand that there is very

little or no authority in the Scripture, and that the whole credit and certainty of our faith resteth only on the church of Rome. But what means Mr. Harding here, to come in with the difference between priests and bishops? Thinketh he that priests and bishops hold only by tradition; or is it so horrible a heresy as he maketh it, to say that, by the Scriptures of God, a bishop and a priest are all one? Verily, Chrysostom saith that between a bishop and a priest there is no difference.”

Of necessity, the value of this must have been felt and duly estimated at that time. It was then, as it may again be, no matter of speculation or curious discussion; but of most practical importance, pressing upon them in full weight.

Our churches did not limit the christian ministry to any particular model.

See the 19th and 23rd of the thirty-nine Articles.

And in the confession of faith of the episcopal reformed church of Scotland, ratified by law in 1567, (and, though set aside for a season, re-enacted after the Restoration, and in force till the final overthrow of episcopacy,) we read thus—

“Of the notes of the true kirk—

“They are neither antiquity, title usurped, *lineal* *descence*, place appointed, nor multitude of men approving an error.”

Again, “Of the right Administration of th

sacraments—That sacraments be rightly ministrate, we judge two things requisite—the one, that they be ministrate by lawful ministers, whom we affirm to be only they that are appointed to the preaching of the word, they being men lawfully chosen by some kirk.”

“ We fly the doctrine of the papistical kirk in participation of the sacraments ; because their ministers are no ministers of Christ Jesus.”*

A reference to individual authorities among the most strenuous advocates of episcopacy would lead to the same result.

Mr. Dodwell himself admits that episcopacy properly so called, as we now understand it, i. e. as a third and superior order, was not known in the church until the second century.

Hooker says that the necessity of polity and regimen in all churches, may be believed without holding any one certain form to be necessary in them all. To this agree Bishop Stillingfleet and others. Bishop Burnet acknowledges bishops and presbyters to be one and the same office. Dr. Hammond’s theory, that the apostles insti-

* In the reign of James I., five out of seven ministers sent by that monarch to Archbishop Bancroft for consecration as Scotch bishops, were found to have received only presbyterian ordination. After some demur, this blot was overlooked ; but what became of the succession ? To what is held by the established church in Scotland, it is, of course, needless to refer.

tuted the office of bishop and deacon, and that the intermediate one of presbyter was soon afterwards introduced is the same in substance, viz. the ministry of the word and of tables.

Waiving further discussion of the period of the reformation, and passing by the reign of Elizabeth, and the time of Archbishop Parker, which, however, is not without its difficulties, the branch of the church through which our present orders must be deduced, is from Archbishop Tillotson, who, in the year 1691, succeeded to Canterbury on the deprivation of Archbishop Sancroft, *who was deposed by civil authority alone*. And therefore if the dispensation of the spirit be limited to a ministry ordained in the line of apostolical episcopal succession exclusively, we have it not in our church at the present day. It ceased with Archbishop Tillotson, who, being lawfully no more than dean of Canterbury, had not as such, according to that system, any right to ordain. Whatever right or power the Crown might have to control the temporalities of the see, over the spiritualities at least it could have none. And the same question in another form arises out of the history of Archbishop Becket, to whom the modern advocates of popery, in opposition to Protestantism and their own church, are pleased to award the crown of martyrdom. When Becket was at Rome, he received, at the hands of the

pope, the see of Canterbury, to which he acknowledged himself never to have been validly admitted, having previously no appointment to it from the head of the church. But what became of his intermediate ordinations?

The consecration of King William's archbishops and bishops, performed while the deprived Bishops Kenn and others, with Archbishop Sancroft, were yet alive, could have imparted no episcopal power or authority. And as none of an inferior order could perpetuate the succession, the episcopacy of those who were raised to the vacated sees must have been invalid. From the nature of episcopal succession, it follows that the orders, not only of the bishops, but of all the priests which are derived from this source, must be invalid.

If thus, on their own admission, there is no hope of salvation out of the line of apostolical episcopal succession, how is the reasonableness of their own hope to be maintained by the advocates of the system? Those who labour with so much industry and zeal to deduce themselves from Rome, ought surely, for their own personal safety, to lose no time in returning thither.

The difficulty attending the accession of William is alone insuperable.

But there is much behind. In fact, the objections to the scheme are so numerous, that there is

trouble only in selection. One can scarcely see the trees for wood. There are so many steps wanting in the ladder, that there is no alternative but to desist or fall.

I have as yet said nothing about the proof and records of ordination or consecration. But supposing other objections to be waived, where is the evidence of the valid consecration of bishops in uninterrupted succession? Why, those of our own are wanting. Bishop Jewel could not produce his. Even the records of Lambeth are defective.* But when we go back to earlier ages, what do we find? The crime of Simony pervading the church like leprosy. No preferment passing without money, and yet every act of every one so preferred absolutely invalid, declared to be null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever. We find bishops deposed as well as popes, and the acts of all such declared to be of no validity. In the council of Nice there was an express declaration as to presbyters who had been ordained by a deposed bishop. They were not admitted to serve. Where then is to be found the channel by which the pure stream of the dispensation of the Spirit has flowed down to us? And if proof of consecration and ordination ex-

* There was a time, within the recollection of persons now living, when serious doubts were entertained whether a bishop of that day had ever been ordained at all.

isted, is there nothing in the mode of appointment? Is that too apostolical? The nomination by a minister of the crown; the idle ceremony of a *congé d'élire*, accompanied by the name of the person who is to be the object of the constrained choice of a dean and chapter, under the threatened penalties of Premunire; and, as I fear, the invocation of the Holy Spirit to direct them in it; though, if otherwise, it would be scarcely less lamentable that such a choice should be made without it. But it is not necessary to pursue this any further.*

An attempt has been recently made, or rather I should say renewed, to escape by the door of the Anglo-Saxon Church; and a reference to one or more of the general councils, but with little success.

As an argument to justify separation from the Church of Rome, this may be used by those who find it necessary, or think it available; for myself I ask no leave of any general council for that purpose, neither did our reformers seek to shelter themselves under any such plea. But how does it assist the scheme of prelatical succession? They must still descend through the Church of Rome, established as it was in this

* In Ireland and the Isle of Man there is not the mere form of election. Bishops are appointed by patent.

kingdom ; and how the system can be aided by calling in the additional infirmities of another broken line which has no records at all, I am at a loss to understand.

The church established in this kingdom, previous to what Mr. Sewell is pleased to call the crimes of the reformation, was to all intents and purposes a part of the Church of Rome, and had long been so. It was deemed right to separate from her ; and most right indeed it was to fall back upon the pure faith of the gospel. But the Anglo-Saxon line of episcopacy, were it purity itself, had been broken ; and tying two ends together in a knot can never make a continuous thread. Our reformers fell back on the Bible. We are built on the Rock of Ages, and the spirit of the living God is with us, or we are no church of Christ. I do not quarrel with those who find comfort in tracing a line of episcopal succession ; but I do object to its exaltation above what is written ; or the substitution of anything for the truth of the everlasting gospel.

One other point must be mentioned, which seems to me to lie at the root of all.

Of the two sacraments, from the valid administration of which we are to look for salvation, one is that of admission to the church of Christ by baptism. Now it is undeniable that the ad-

ministration of baptism by lay hands has been in use in every age of the church, early and late ; and its validity has been admitted in all. There have been bishops of our own church who never were baptized by the hands of any one episcopally ordained. This was the case with the celebrated Bishop Butler, if not with Archbishop Secker also. By the admission of some of our ablest divines, no less than by the decision of our ecclesiastical courts, it is ruled that baptism administered by laymen is valid, and not to be repeated.

An attempt has been made to distinguish between the validity and legality of such baptisms ; but if established, what does it avail, at least to our present purpose ? The inquiry to be answered is, How could he admit others into the church, who was not himself a member of it ? I shall not go into any historical proof of the fact, than which nothing is more certain.

To sum up all then in few words.

1. There is, in Scripture, no absolute appointment of any system of church government.
2. Nor any example of such a system as is contended for by the advocates of apostolical prelatial succession.
3. There is no sufficient proof of any descent from the apostles.
4. The line has been broken repeatedly.

5. There has been a flood of intervening corruption.

6. The initiatory rite itself has been wanting in its valid administration.

7. There was an abandonment of the whole system and scheme at the Reformation, when the Church of England became a distinct church.

It remains only that a little be said on the consequences and results of that with which the Jews were intoxicated of old, and many like-minded Christians are intoxicated still.

This at least is no matter of speculation or conjecture: it is already on record in the history of the Church of Rome. And if much that is corrupt in the faith and practice of that church has not yet been avowed and adopted, sufficient indications have been afforded of the length to which some of the leading advocates of the system under consideration are willing to go.

1. Tradition with all its infirmity is substituted for the truth of God.

2. There is a reservation of the leading truths of the gospel.

3. The character of the church of Christ is changed. She is made to stand in the place of the Redeemer, whose work is marred. His atonement is incomplete, his righteousness insufficient. His intercession and the office of the Holy Spirit are both put aside.

4. Spirituality is buried in the grave of forms.

5. The sacraments are surrounded with superstition, and changed in their nature and use.

6. And the Scriptures being put aside as an imperfect revelation, new doctrines are taught, new sacraments instituted, new observances are required, on the alleged foundation of the Catholic Church, as being the authoritative interpreter of all that is written, and the equally authoritative revealer of the mind of the Spirit.

7. Ceremonies are multiplied, and the kingdom of God is no longer righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The office of the ministers of the gospel is of course entirely changed, and their true character lost. "Their assumed prerogative is to offer sacrifice to God, and intercede with him for the people, instead of being faithful stewards, dispensing his word, and pointing out the only path through faith to salvation. They are supposed to be alone initiated in the mysteries of the faith; to be in immediate communication with its Divine Founder, and to influence, if not actually administer, the judgments of Heaven."

Thunders more awful than those of Sinai are heard. All is discouragement: the object of the christian ministry in their hands being apparently to try how difficult, how painful, how

uncertain the Christian's course can be made with that ministry, and how impossible without it !

In a word, their steps are dark, their ministrations mysterious ; suited rather to the office of a priest of some heathen mythology than of ambassadors from Christ, ministers of the everlasting gospel, whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains, as those that bring glad tidings, that publish peace.

The aspect which it wears towards those of other communions is fearful in the extreme. No purity of faith, no labour of love, no personal piety, no manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit, will avail anything. Though stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, they pass not through the eye of this needle, and shall not see the kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture ? The Lord knoweth them that are his. Under whatever form of ecclesiastical polity a man may live, it still holds good, and is an infallible truth, that if he believe and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be saved.

The worth of episcopacy is readily granted. High antiquity, everything short of apostolical origin and appointment, is conceded to it, with all of privilege and authority that can be asked for it on that account. What is denied to it is

heavenly birth ; its asserted institution by our Lord or his apostles ; and the consequent claim to that exclusive purity which belongs to any stream whose fountain is divine.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE excellent Bishop Hall makes his stand, unequivocally, upon the divine right of Episcopacy ; and as his name alone will carry weight with many who are acquainted with his more devotional contemplations, I am desirous of here adding upon his work a few words which could not be conveniently introduced elsewhere.

It is not possible, I think, to read that work without regret that it should be characterized by so much acerbity of spirit and vehemence of style, no sure indication of the strength of any cause. It abounds in such expressions as—"poor beggarly evasions," "mere gullery," "giddy conceits," "absurd and wicked fancies," with others of a still less refined character, that I care not to quote. Of "Jerome," respecting whom Augustine asked who knew any thing that Jerome did not know, he says, "that he was naturally a waspish and hot good man, who, being vexed with some cross proceedings, flew out into expressions, &c.," while he maintains the authority of all that passes under the name of Ignatius ; "confidently shutting up the whole with a resolute word, as from that martyr and saint," the genuineness of which may, I believe, be reasonably doubted—"My soul for theirs who obey their bishops, presbyters, and deacons." "He dares boldly say, that there are weighty points of faith which have not so strong evidence in Holy Scripture as the divine institution of the majority of bishops over presbyters." And

yet he admits in so many words that “the same course was not held at once in every church; some which were nearer, being supplied by the apostle’s presence, needing not so present an episcopacy—others that were small, needed not their full number of officers. Neither were there, perhaps, fit men for those places of eminence, to be found everywhere.”

Again—That when congregations multiplied, presbyters began to emulate each other, and make parties for their own advantage; then, according to Jerome, whom he quotes as his authority, the distinction between the office of bishops and presbyters began to be both known and observed; *the apostles*, as he says, finding it necessary, for the avoidance of schism and disorder, that some eminent persons should everywhere be lifted up above the rest, &c. *This* Jerome did *not* say; but even if the statement were without fault or flaw, that cannot be essential to a church which some of the earliest confessedly had not, and which was plainly not of original appointment as a divine institution, but simply of adoption for expediency.

The bishop seems to treat as of comparatively little importance the question whether episcopacy is to be accounted a distinct order, or but a degree in the same order; which, with the admission that all churches were not placed under episcopal government by the apostles themselves, and that bishops were chosen for the avoidance of schism—according to St. Jerome’s illustration of the choice of a general by the army, which the bishop admits to have been the case, not denying the fact of the election, or the correctness of the illustration—seems to yield all that could be desired by one much less favourable to episcopacy than ourselves.

The practice of the church, the uninterrupted succession of bishops from the period of the departure of the apostles from this earth to glory to the present time, is nothing *to the point*, if the assertion be not made good, that the first bishop of every church received an apostolical appointment *as such*. This is obvious to any one who will bear in mind that the question under consideration is the transmission of valid ministerial ordination, by means or in the channel of episcopal succession, from the hands of the apostles.

This question is left by the Bishop untouched.

It is no uncommon practice to claim the sanction of Divine Authority for the episcopate as a superior order in the church, and at the same time, on a plea of charity towards others, to surrender it as of little or no importance; claiming for it a divine origin, and then waiving it as unnecessary.

This is not satisfactory, or intelligible; for if the matter be of Divine right, it cannot be at man's disposal as an indifferent thing; neither is that apostolical charity which is indulged at the expense of apostolical institutions. Any divine appointment or command may be dispensed with in like manner. If episcopacy be, in any sense, of divine appointment, it challenges our homage as such: it is not to be raised and extinguished by the same breath.

This mistaken view of the subject, for such it surely is, seems to arise from a desire to stand upon other ground than that on which the Church of England was placed by our reformers.

“The true touchstone of a church,” says Bishop Burnet, “must be the purity of her doctrine, and the conformity of her faith with that which Christ and his

apostles taught. In this the Scriptures are clear and plain to every one that will read and consider them sincerely and without prejudice."

There is a beautiful passage in a pastoral injunction to his clergy by Archbishop Sancroft, (himself a non-juror,) which one could wish might find its way to every bosom ;—preferable surely in every respect to that from Ignatius, before referred to, whether *that* be genuine or not,—in which he exhorts them to "walk in wisdom towards those that are not of our communion ; and if there be in their parishes any such, that they neglect not frequently to confer with them in the spirit of meekness, seeking by all good ways and means to gain and win them over : more especially, that they have a very tender regard to our brethren the Protestant Dissenters ; that, upon occasion offered, they visit them at their houses, and receive them kindly at their own, and treat them fairly wherever they meet them, discoursing calmly and civilly with them ; persuading them (if it may be) to a full compliance with our church, or at least that 'whereto we have already attained, we may all walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.' " " And, in the last place, fervent prayer to the God of peace, *for the universal blessed union of all Reformed Churches, both at home and abroad, against our common enemies* ; that all they who do confess the holy name of our dear Lord, and do agree in the truth of his holy word, may also meet in one holy communion, and live in perfect unity and godly love."

LETTER II.

ON TRADITION.

A REVIEW OF

THE APPENDIX TO A SERMON

BY THE

REV. E. H. MANNING,

NOW THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON MANNING.

A LETTER.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have been afraid to write on the subject of Mr. Manning's Appendix and the Sermon to which it belongs. To go into a minute examination of authorities would be to me impossible in various ways—want of time, want of access to several of the writings that have been quoted by Mr. Manning, and the many other books to which reference must be made for such a purpose, forbid the attempt. But if it were possible, I would not enter on it; for if I am not absolutely and altogether wrong, such a pursuit is needless, and would be vain; and, as in many other cases, all indeed of a like nature, a reference to first principles is more to the purpose.

As a prefatory remark, I beg leave to remind

you, and I beg you to bear in mind throughout, that I write to you as being members of the Church of England; and that the Sermon and Appendix are the work of a clergyman of that Church.

In the second place—all considerations of a merely personal kind must be put aside—truth is no respecter of persons. There may be found individual members of the Church of Rome in whose bosoms love to God and man burns strongly and shines brightly: men who are sincere in principle, and devout in heart and life. Yet that there is error in that Church, and in their creed, neither we, nor Mr. Manning, can entertain a doubt.

And now, as we approach the subject a little nearer, let me assure you that all idea of style or diction, or whatever might be ornamental only, is far away. I wish, without any attempt at the science of argument, of which there is a little too much display in the Appendix, to endeavour to make the matter plain, try the question fairly, and come to a right judgment upon its real merits.

As in all controversies, and upon all occasions, it is well to understand clearly, in the first instance, the point at issue; and I must be allowed to say, that if this had been *distinctly* and *unequivocally* stated by Mr. Manning, the

greater part of the pains that have been taken to gather passages together and put them in print might have been spared. It is *not* whether the Church, the creeds, and antiquity, are to be rejected altogether; but what is their proper place and office in the interpretation of Scripture. Is it authority or aid that she brings? Is the Church a Witness or a Rule?

It is not necessary to discuss the introductory matter. The great point maintained by Mr. Manning is, that Scripture *and* Antiquity, or Scripture *and* the Creed, attested by Universal Tradition, are the *Rule* of Faith to us. This, he says, is the recognised principle of the reformed Church of England;—the universal rule of the primitive Church.

In other places it is stated thus—“Holy Scripture interpreted by the Catholic Church”—“Scripture and Universal Tradition.”

The question, then, being this, the first consideration obviously is, where are we to seek the authority of the Church of England on this point? If she be silent on any subject, you may gather what you can from the writings of members of her communion of acknowledged worth; though it would be strange if any Church should omit all mention of what is most important; and a curious coincidence indeed, if, separating from the Church of Rome as to our Church did very

mainly upon this ground, she should still take no notice of it.

Yet it must be admitted that not one word in support of the position can be found in any of her title deeds ; and with extracts by Mr. Manning from many writers belonging to the Church of England (17 in number) there is no more allusion to *her*, to the Church herself, to that for which she is responsible, and by which she is to be judged, than if she were as silent as the grave.

To put this matter, then, on its right footing, and setting aside all parade of scholastic reasoning, which only dazzles and blinds the eye of the reader, let us see what the Church herself says in those authoritative characters to which she has a right to refer.

Can any thing be more clear, more unequivocal, or decisive, than her own Article in the following words :

Art. VI. Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

But, says Mr. Manning, no mention is made (in the Article) of interpretation, and therefore

it may be inferred that, when the Church used those plain words recognising the authority of Scriptures alone, she might mean, and must be understood to have said, that by Scriptures she meant Scriptures and Antiquity—Scriptures interpreted by Antiquity—Scriptures and the Creed. Now,

1st. Considering the grounds of her separation from the Church of Rome, this is most improbable.

2dly. It would have been a very disingenuous and dishonest mode of proceeding. Nothing could have been more easy than to have added words expressing such a meaning. Mental reservations belong to the Church of Rome.

3dly. She would be inconsistent with herself; for in a further Article, the 34th, on the Traditions of the Church, we read, “ Whosoever through his private judgment willingly and purposely doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, *which be not repugnant to the Word of God*, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly,” &c. And at its close—“ Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish *ceremonies or rites* of the Church *ordained only by Man’s Authority*—clearly recognising the paramount authority of Scripture.

Now it is quite clear, when the Church speaks, in this Article, of Traditions not repugnant to the Word of God, she must of necessity mean that Scripture is the test by which all Tradition is to be tried, else there is no meaning in the words; and if Scripture be that test, there is an end to the suggestion or pretence that the meaning of Scripture is to be ascertained by Tradition, or we shall be in a magic circle indeed, at once as active and as stationary as a squirrel in a cage. Scripture the test of Tradition, and Tradition the authoritative interpreter of Scripture; each requisite for the existence of the other; the authority of each to be established by the other; neither of any value in the absence of the other—neither to be understood without the other.

But the Creed is more particularly referred to by Mr. Manning, and conjoined with it to form the Rule of Faith. There is an Article expressly upon the Creeds, viz. the VIIIth. “The three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed, *for* they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.”

It would be a waste of words to try to make this more plain. How can that be independent of Scripture which derives its existence from it, and is recognised only as being in conformity with it?

But once more. The Church of England has appointed certain Homilies to be read, which are

of unquestionable authority, as far as she and her ministers are concerned. The first of these is an exhortation to the reading and knowledge of Holy Scripture ; in an early part of which is a passage to the point, more remarkable for its simplicity and fidelity than its adaptation to the taste of modern times :—

“ Let us diligently search for the Well of Life in the books of the New and Old Testament, and not run to the stinking puddles of men’s Traditions, devised by men’s imaginations for our justification and salvation ; for in Holy Scripture is fully contained what we ought to do, and what to eschew, what to believe, what to love, and what to look for at God’s hand at length.”

There is a further Homily of a very remarkable kind as connected with the subject under consideration, viz. on certain difficult places in Holy Scripture. And here we find still the same injunction again and again repeated and enforced, to let nothing hinder all from searching for themselves the Word of the living God ; and no one sentence or word is there, in either pointing to any book or writing whatever as co-equal in authority with Scripture, or a necessary interpreter of it, or to be joined to it, or to be once named in comparison with it :—

“ Shall we Christian men think to learn the knowledge of God and of ourselves in any earthly man’s work or writing sooner or better than in the Holy Scriptures, written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost ?”

“ If we desire the knowledge of heavenly wisdom, why had we rather learn the same of man than of God himself, who, as St. James saith, is the giver of wisdom ? Yea, why will ye not learn it at Christ’s own mouth, who, promising to be present with the Church till the world’s end, doth perform his promise, in that he is not only with us by his grace and tender pity, but also in this—that he speaketh presently unto us in the Holy Scriptures, to the great and endless comfort of all them that have any feeling of God at all in them.”

“ Let every man, woman, and child, therefore, with all their heart thirst for and desire God’s Holy Scriptures—love them, embrace them, have their delight and pleasure in hearing and reading them, so as at length we may be transformed and changed into them.

In conformity with all this, the Church has provided that the Books of the Old Testament shall be read once, and the Gospels and Epistles three times, in the course of every year, in the audience of the people, as a part of her public service ; besides large quotations from them in her daily and occasional services ; “ that the people, by daily hearing of Holy Scripture read in the church, might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true religion.” “ For this cause be cut off Anthems, Responds, Invitations, and such like things as did break the continual course of the reading of the Scripture.”*

The last-named Homily closes with a prayer

* *Note.*—See the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

in the words of the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent, and which shall be my last reference on the present occasion.

If there be meaning in words—which, from the use that is sometimes made of them, one might be tempted to doubt—the proposition maintained by Mr. Manning, that Scripture and the Creed attested by universal Tradition, as the Rule of Faith recognised by the Reformed Church of England, is, to say the least, unsupported by the authority of that Church.

But, passing by this failure of proof, this entire disproof of his position, in silence, without note or comment, or apology of any kind, Mr. Manning presents us with an array of witnesses, in the shape of extracts, from the works of many writers of this our Church.

These *might* be all put aside for several reasons :—

1. They are *incompetent*, for want of authority. The Church of England does not pretend that anything but Scripture itself could give such authority, neither can it ; since nothing short of that which is divine can be admitted, or be of any avail ; and no one pretends to this, or is quoted for any such purpose. It is admitted, indeed, elsewhere, by Mr. Manning, that no such delegation of authority is to be found in Scripture, which to me is conclusive. Mr. Manning urges,

indeed, that unless it be negated in Scripture, it must be taken to exist ; which is mere assumption. The Bible comes with the Divine impress upon it, and admits of nothing human to share its dignity or usurp its throne. Like its Great Author, it neither receives honour from man nor gives its glory to another. I do maintain, therefore, and insist, that the Bible being acknowledged as the Word of God, in that Word there must be found a delegation of the right that is claimed, or that right does not exist. No multiplication of merely human authorities (if the use of the word in a mitigated sense may be allowed) will avail anything, any more than a multiplication of ciphers to any extent would make an unit.

2. They are *irrelevant*. Admitting that they could be in any degree competent, they are nothing to the purpose.

In quoting from any writing, human or divine, it is necessary to ascertain the occasion of it, and the object of the writer. In the writings of the Reformers reference is made to Antiquity, not as a necessary interpreter of Scripture and a Rule of Faith, but as opposed to the more modern pretensions of the Church of Rome, showing thereby, that the latter had departed from the faith and practice of the primitive Church—an argument strictly *ad hominem*, the Roman Church

claiming to stand upon Antiquity, the Protestant Church showing that they could not abide the test. To assume that such an appeal to Antiquity is of authority with reference to Scripture, would be like adopting the claim of one of two candidates for a peerage, because he proved a pedigree a little older than his rival. One may be superior in antiquity to the other, and yet neither have any claim to the title. What is objected to is, not the use of Antiquity and a reference to the Fathers, but the exalting them to an equality with Scripture, and making them essential as the Rule of Faith. Suppose I were to refer to Mr. Manning, and quote some passages from his book, which I may approve; do I therefore assent to the whole—much more exalt him to the place of a teacher, so as to take anything on his word?

3. They are not in reality many, but one, all referring to, and adopting the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis, with respect to Tradition, that to give it effect, it must have been believed *in all places, at all times, and by all men*; which rule is most properly and successfully used against the Roman Church; for where is the tradition which, unsupported by Scripture, will stand the test?

“Papias,” says Dr. Owen,* “was a contemporary of Polycarp, in the very next age after the Apostles. Tradi-

* Dr. Owen, in his Preface to the Commentary on the Hebrews.

tion of what was said or done by Christ or the Apostles, and what expositions they gave, he professed to set a very high value upon, equal to, if not above, the Scriptures: and two things resulted from his search after them:—

“ That he did not think that there was any Church appointed to be the declarer and preserver of Apostolical traditions, but made his inquiry of all the individual ancient men that he could meet with who had conversed with any of the Apostles.

“ And that, by all his pains, he gathered together a rhapsody of incredible stories, fables, errors, and useless curiosities; and such issue will the endeavours of men have, who forsake the stable Word of Prophecy to follow anything under the specious name of Tradition.”

4th. But the quotations made by Mr. Manning seem to me, in some instances, to prove anything but that which they are cited to support—viz. that the Church may be, and is, a witness, but not a rule. Here is all the difference between *aid and authority*. The former is not disputed in any degree: the latter only is denied.

5th. I decline to go into any minute examination of the passages quoted by Mr. Manning, for the reasons now and before stated; and further, because it would be easy to produce as many names on the other side, and there is no end of such battling. But availing myself of a facility of reference to a work of one of the writers from which passages have been quoted, sufficiently obscure indeed, but which have enabled Mr. Manning to class him in the list of

his authorities, I will beg leave to quote a few passages from Archbishop Usher's "Summary of Religion," which may be read with pleasure and advantage.

*Archbishop Usher's Sum and Substance of
Christian Religion.*

Pa. 7.—Q. Where, then, is the Word of God now certainly to be learned?

A. Only out of the Book of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures, which are the only certain testimonies unto the Church, of the Word of God.

Pa. 12.—By hanging the credit and authority of the Scriptures on the Church's sentence, the Papists do make the Church's work of greater credit than the Word of God, whereas the Scriptures of God cannot be judged or sentenced of any; and God only is a worthy witness himself in his Word and by his Spirit, which give mutual testimony one of the other, &c.

And again—

Show some further reasons that the authority of the Scriptures doth not depend upon the Church.

A. 1st. Because to believe the Scriptures is a work of Faith; but the Church cannot infuse faith.

2nd. Any authority that the Church hath, it must prove it by the Scriptures; therefore the Scripture dependeth not on the Church.

3rd. If an Infidel should ask the Church how they are sure that Christ died for them; if they should answer, because themselves say so, it would be ridiculous; when they should say, because the Scripture teacheth so.

Pa. 19.—God being the author of these Books, they must needs be perfect, as he himself is, who, being for his wisdom able, and for his love to his Church willing, to set down such a Rule as may guide them to eternal life, hath not failed herein.

Pa. 20.—*Q.* Our adversaries object that it is by Tradition, and not by Scripture, that we know such and such books to be Scripture.

A. Though new beginners do first learn it from the faithful, yet afterwards they know it upon grounds of Scripture, as an ignorant man may be told of the king's coin; but it is not the telling, but the king's stamp that maketh it current and good coin.

Pa. 21.—*Q.* The Scriptures, you say, are a rule and a line, but they are not, as the Church of Rome imagineth, like a rule of lead, which may be bowed every way at men's pleasure.

A. They are as a rule of steel, that is firm and changeth not; (Matt. v. 18, Ps. xix. 9;) for, seeing they are sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, (as before proved,) it followeth of necessity that there is a most certain Rule of Faith for instruction both of faith and works, to be learned out of them by ordinary means of reading, prayer, study, the gifts of tongues, and other sciences, to which God promiseth the assistance of his Grace.

Q. Are the Scriptures, then, plain and easy to be understood?

A. To such as are by Grace enlightened and made willing to understand, howsoever some things remain obscure to exercise their diligence; yet the fundamental doctrine of faith and precepts of life are all plain and perspicuous, for all doctrine necessary to be known unto eternal salvation is

set forth in the Scriptures most clearly and plainly, even to the capacity and understanding of the simple and unlearned.

Pa. 23.—*Q.* What assurance may be had of the right understanding of the Scriptures?

A. For the words, it is to be had out of the original text, or translation of the same; for the sense and meaning, only out of the Scriptures themselves, which, by places plain and evident, do express whatsoever is obscure and hard touching matters necessary to eternal salvation.

Pa. 24.—*Q.* Why must the true sense and meaning of the Scriptures be learned out of the Scriptures themselves?

A. Because the Spirit of God alone is the certain interpreter of his Word written by his Spirit. The interpretation, therefore, must be by the same Spirit by which the Scripture was written, of which Spirit we have no certainty upon any man's credit, but only so far forth as his saying may be confirmed by the Holy Scriptures.

Q. What gather you from hence?

A. That no interpretation of holy fathers, popes, councils, customs, or practices of the Church, either contrary to the manifest words of Scripture, or containing matters which cannot necessarily be proved out of the Scriptures, are to be received as an undoubted truth.

Q. How then is Scripture to be interpreted by Scripture?

A. By the Analogy of Faith, and the scope and circumstance of the present place and conference of other plain and evident places, by which all such as are obscure and hard to be understood ought to be interpreted.

Q. What persons are meet to read or hear the Scriptures?

A. The Holy Scriptures are reverently and profitably to be read and heard of all sorts and degrees of men and women; for the lay people as well as the learned must read

the Scriptures, or hear them read, both privately and openly, so as they may receive profit by them.

(After answering objections of papists.)

Pa. 27.—Q. What is the sum of all that hath been delivered?

A. That we should labour for a due knowledge of the true God, that we may know what we worship, and worship what we know. Lastly, forasmuch as all that is written in the Word of God is written for our instruction and learning, therefore we, being prepared by true prayer, sanctified by faith, and seasoned with the spirit of sobriety and humility, may safely learn so much as is revealed in the Scriptures for our profiting in the knowledge of God.”

The next chapter in the appendix is designed to prove the same Rule of Faith to be *primitive*. I do not mean to be uncivil or unkind to Mr. Manning, but I must say that the mode of proof is, in my judgment, absolutely childish. The oral preaching of the Apostles, he says, was the sole Rule of Faith before the Scriptures were written, and is so recognized in Holy Scripture—(By the way, why is the term *holy* applied to Scripture and not to Tradition, if they are to be made one?)—and was the chief Rule of Faith to the Universal Church until the Scriptures were collected. Granting all this, what does it prove!—That after the Scriptures were written, and after they were collected, and after the Canon of Scripture had been completed, it was to be so still? To

what end, then, were the Scriptures written, but for the preservation of that truth which else had been corrupted, mutilated, and lost? Of necessity, the Word preached was the Rule until it was written; but how quickly it became expedient to commit it to writing appears from the introduction to St. Luke's Gospel.

Two things of some importance are gathered from this preface or introduction of the Evangelist.

1st. That mistakes, from infirmity or design, were made at a very early period, which it was requisite to correct for the benefit of all ages.

2nd. That when the Gospel was committed to writing, that written word was to be the standard, that to which men were to resort in preference to the loose, vague, uncertain recollection of what was orally delivered. And has the world been possessed of this treasure for nearly eighteen centuries, only to be thrown back upon that which was not to be trusted even then?

The recollection of oral instruction would naturally, and indeed necessarily, be cherished by the early Church, and therefore referred to, because there were then very slender means of multiplying and dispersing copies of what was written. But is that, which resulted from the peculiar condition of the first age, to be the chosen rule of all ages? To what end has the

good providence of God preserved and transmitted his Word, if men are thus to add to it or dispense with it? It matters not whether you put it aside altogether, or mix anything else with it, or put an arbitrary interpretation upon it.

How early, indeed, Tradition erred, and how unsafe a guide it must be, we learn from the first notice we have of it, and that in Scripture itself, John xxi. 23 :

“ Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die : yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die : but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee ?”

The infallibility of the Church as distinct from Scripture is then asserted. We are to believe only that which cannot be false. We are to believe the interpretation of the Church ; therefore that interpretation must be infallibly certain. The authority of the Church is thus exalted above that of the Scriptures, for we are to believe Scripture only as interpreted to us by the Church. The passage in 2 Tim., then, should be read thus :—“ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and (*together with Tradition*) *will be* profitable for doctrine,” &c.

But to return. Great stress is laid upon the oral preaching of the Apostles having been at first the Rule of Faith. Yes, of necessity it was, unless where there were means of access to the

writings of the Old Testament, to which, be it observed, that both our Lord and his Apostles constantly refer, rejecting all the traditions of the Jews.

“ But what if the Apostles had left us no Scriptures at all : ought we not to follow the line of tradition which they delivered to them to whom they committed the Churches ? ”

But this begs the whole question,—What if they have ? And have they not ? And how can we value them aright if we seek to learn elsewhere ? I observe at this part of the Appendix a reference to Cyril. Allow me to make one also. In his celebrated Lectures, *on the Creed*, there occurs this passage :—“ This seal have thou ever on thy mind, which now by way of summary has been touched on in its head, and, if the Lord grant, shall hereafter be set forth, according to our power, with Scripture proofs. For, concerning the divine and sacred mysteries of the Faith, we ought not to deliver even the most casual remark without the Holy Scriptures, or be drawn aside by mere probabilities and the artifices of argument. Do not, then, believe me because I tell you these things, unless you receive from the Holy Scriptures the proof of what is set forth ; for this salvation, which is of our faith, is not by ingenious reasonings, but by proof from the Holy Scriptures.” And it is the more

worthy of attention, because, when writing in the same lecture respecting the Canon of Scripture, he repeatedly says that the Church will teach which books are certain, both of the Old Testament and in the New. “ Those, says he, study earnestly, which we read confidently in the Church.”

I add a few words on each of the quotations made by Mr. Manning from the ancient writers whom he cites, and which will show, I think, how very inadequate they are to the task assigned to them by Mr. Manning, premising only that they do, one and all of them, insist that they hold nothing but what can be shown to be in strict agreement with the Holy Scriptures. And who objects to anything so held? If, therefore, says St. Cyprian, it is enjoined either in the Gospels or the Epistles of the Apostles, or contained in the Acts, let this divine and holy tradition be observed. Mr. Manning suggests that by this expression St. Cyprian plainly means the whole Gospel of Christ attested by the whole Apostolical Traditions both written and unwritten? But I must confess that I think his meaning by far less clear than that of St. Cyprian.

The following are the Writers alluded to by Mr. Manning:—1, Irenæus; 2, Tertullian; 3, Origen; 4, Eusebius of Cesarea; 5, Athanasius; 6, St. Chrysostom; 7, Gregory Nazianzen; 8, St.

Hippolytus ; 9, St. Basil ; 10, St. Cyprian ; 11, St. Cyril ; and 12, Vincentius Lirinensis.

1. Irenæus was surrounded by heretics, “who,” says he in the very passage quoted by Mr. Manning, “when they are convicted from the Scriptures, turn about and accuse the Scriptures themselves as if they were incorrect or unauthentic, alleging that they are equivocally expressed, and that the truth cannot be found from them by those that are ignorant of their tradition, which was delivered, not in writing, but by word of mouth.” So that Irenæus referred to Scripture in the first instance ; but, taking the heretics on their own ground, he shows that they agree neither with Scripture nor with Tradition.

2. Tertullian, in like manner, is answering heretics ; and I may just observe that he became one himself at last, so that much is not to be gained from him.

3. Origen is surely too allegorical and too fanciful to be of much weight. He is anything but a safe guide.

4. Eusebius of Cesarea was a defender of Arius, and has always been claimed by the Arians. I ask no aid from him.

5. The words of Athanasius are—“What things I have learned I have expressed in accordance with the Holy Scriptures.” I should have quoted him myself.

6. The works of Chrysostom are very voluminous; and all that is given from him is one detached and broken sentence of four lines—itsself a commentary on a passage in Scripture. Nothing could be more unsatisfactory. But I also may be allowed a quotation from Chrysostom as well as Mr. Manning, who must acknowledge the force, and should bow to the authority, of what follows; “The revelation of the Holy Ghost inspireth the true meaning (of the Scriptures) unto them that with humility and diligence do search for the same.”

7. The quotation from Gregory Nazianzen is not at all to the purpose.

8. The few words quoted from Hippolytus are a simple declaration of what is stated in Scripture, and can have been introduced only because it happened that the word tradition is found among them—it meaning Scripture.

9. These are the words of Basil, even as quoted by Mr. Manning:—“See how dangerous it is to take any thing from, or to add to, those things which are delivered by the Spirit.”

10. Cyprian means by Tradition the written Scriptures, what had been delivered to us by the Apostles.

11. Cyril has been referred to in another place. Nothing can be more expressly against what is here attempted to be maintained by his authority.

12. Vincentius Lirinensis teaches plainly that the Canon of the Bible is perfect, and sufficient of itself for the truth of the Catholic faith.

Upon this foundation rest the averments respecting antiquity and tradition of the oral preaching of the Apostles as a Rule of Faith; and by such proofs and references as these are the propositions to be maintained, that the tradition of the oral preaching of the Apostles is a Rule of Faith, distinct from, and of equal authority with, the Scriptures: and that the Scriptures must be interpreted by us according to the sense of that oral preaching which is preserved to us in the Creed. If this be so, Scripture may retire altogether.

Thus it is then.—Certain writers of antiquity are referred to and quoted as it may suit a present purpose; and that is called proof of Universal Tradition. We have seen how little has been gleaned from these worthies. But these very writers were fallible men, uninspired men, not agreeing one with another on all points. How can they be properly cited as authorities and interpreters of Holy Writ? But further; Heresies sprang early in the Church. Heretics referred to Tradition in the controversy. Those writers only that we consider sound, constitute what is called Universal Tradition. But how is it to be known which writers are heretical, and

which sound? If the answer be, because of their agreement with the Scriptures, then is Scripture the test, and Mr. Manning's argument at an end. Yet what other mode is there? Nothing that we have yet seen will at all avail for the purpose, which would be better answered by some proof that the ancient Church laid claim to an authority and a right to teach doctrines not contained in the Scriptures, and not proveable thereby. This would perhaps be rather too high a position to be maintained by a member of the Church of England; and yet, unless this or something equivalent to it be asserted, I do not see what is contended for. In the writings of other modern *Oxonians* the assertion is plainly put forth, that if the meaning of Scripture, as interpreted by the Church, be repugnant to reason, reason must give way. I have not found this in all its nakedness in the Appendix; but the principle involved in it must be maintained to give effect to the argument; and, it is to be observed, that in the Appendix the ground is changed, or, at least, the mode of proof is. When it is to be established by the writings of the English Reformers, the claim for the Church is the right of *interpretation*, the Article being too strong and specific to allow of anything else (or, indeed, as I say, of that either). But when the ancient Fathers are referred to, the authority

of *tradition*, as the unwritten word, is pressed upon us. But to return :—

In the early ages of the Church—for reasons that have been alluded to, and others that are obvious—much that was believed had come down by tradition, and was known and received as *such*, by oral teaching alone, to very many; and therefore, at a very early period, the first principles of the Christian Faith were embodied in a Creed, most simple in the first instance, but which necessarily became more extended in substance, and refined in expression, to meet the heresies that sprang up from time to time. In whatever form, however, any Church propounds a summary of Belief, it is, and must be, set forth under all the sanctions of the promises to obedience, and threatened punishment of disobedience, to those who receive or reject the truth of God, which that Creed is believed to express. Now, if the Church be the authorized expounder of the Scriptures and Rule of Faith, all men are bound to believe that statement, not because it may be proved from Scripture, but because the Church has delivered it. But our Church takes no such ground; she declares that particular Churches have erred, and may err again, in matters of faith; and not only particular Churches but General Councils too.

And here another difficulty meets us; for as

the Church, whichever be the true one, is the authorized and authoritative expounder of Scripture, it is the duty of all to discover *in the first instance* which is the true Church; and this (as we cannot look to the Scriptures for light and guidance) must be, in any way, to at least 999 out of every 1,000 quite impossible. What then will be the result? A blind adherence to any chance form of faith, or an indifference to all alike.

In the judgment of the Church of England, however, in so far as any of her Creeds are faithful expositions of the truth of God, in so far only are they binding on the consciences of men. The Church is, as she declares, a witness and keeper of the Truth. If she were more than this, it would be her duty to hide the Scripture from the people; for, in proportion as they become acquainted with it, they might be misguided by it; and they would be safe only as their belief is in conformity with her interpretation of it. At all events, their faith would be in her, not in it, or in it only as interpreted by her. This is Infallibility and Popery. *But the Church cannot stand in judgment for us at the last day; she will not appear then in any collective capacity.* We must all appear, and everyone receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil. And yet she may explain away this also, or supplant

it by Absolution, for she is the representative of Christ and his Apostles, and can forgive sin. This may be a pleasant Creed to some, but I more than doubt if such doings on earth will be ratified in heaven. Yet, if all this do of right belong to the Church of Christ, then is not the Church of England a part of that Church, for she disclaims it altogether.

This has led me away from the position of Vincentius Lirinensis, echoed by many, and re-echoed by Mr. Manning, viz. “*always, everywhere, and by all.*” Now where is this to be found verified? It is a question that never can be answered. Even by Vincentius Lirinensis himself the Canon of Scripture was upheld as complete.

Mr. Manning claims for the interpretation of Scripture the same proof as that which established the letter of it. There is much in his Appendix on this head.

The mode of proof of everything that is historical must in a great measure be the same, for it is in its nature similar; but the *authenticity* and *authority* of Scripture, which are distinct the one from the other, do not rest solely on proof of the fact that the Church has kept and transmitted certain books; though *if* the mode of proof *were* the same in kind, in degree and extent there is no comparison; for surely no

man can contend that any interpretation of the Scriptures, however limited, is of such general acknowledgment as Scripture itself: and to say that the mode of proof is the same, when it differs so greatly in degree, were this all, could never be correct.

The maxim of Vincentius Lirinensis was adopted as a rule for interpreting the Scriptures in answer to those Heretics who used to quote the Scriptures as a shade to their errors; and it was not unreasonable to show what the Church held, and had always held to that period. What would now be more readily resorted to than the writings of the learned and the good, in every age, for the same purpose, only as aid, not as having authority? For my own part, I do not believe that the Church, in her purest and best state, ever assumed or pretended to possess the right now claimed for her, of declaring what is the truth of God irrespective of the Word of God, and the plain tenor of it. “*En codicem sacrum*” was on every hand that pointed the way to life and glory. It is to no authority independent of the Scriptures, but to the Church as maintaining in simplicity of faith what is declared in the Scriptures, that the ancient Fathers appealed. It is, indeed, very undeniable that the Creed going by the name of Athanasius, which Vincentius Lirinensis was at one time supposed to

have written, contains a statement of what is declared to be the truth of the Scriptures; though many may wish that such a particular *definition* of the doctrine of the Trinity had been enforced in a less formidable manner; but still it is, as containing the doctrine of the Bible and the truth of God, that it is so stated and adopted by the Church of England—not by virtue of any right of arbitrary interpretation; not as the Creed of the Church, but as the truth of God. The Article of the Church of England already quoted is express to the point. It is again urged by Mr. Manning (p. 76) that the oral preaching of the Apostles was the sole Rule of Faith before the Scriptures were written, and is so recognised in Scripture itself. Certainly it was; a man must live before his life can be written; and the oral preaching of the Apostles, before the New Testament was compiled, was of the same authority as their Epistles or other writings are now. What is required for Mr. Manning's argument is not a retrospective but a prospective reference to, and recognition of, oral teaching, as of authority in time to come (and this of necessity not the preaching itself, but such traditional recollection of it as might chance to travel down to future ages). To what end were the Scriptures collected and the Canon fixed, if something else might still be propounded as of equal authority with them.

The Scripture is really of no value, if it be no longer the single standard of truth.

I cannot follow out the argument now, nor is it necessary: the conclusion is inevitable. If any right to interpret Scripture can be established irrespective of Scripture, there is an end to revelation as necessary, or complete, or of any authority whatever.

It is said by Mr. Manning, (probably to make the claims of Tradition correspond with the more modern one of interpretation,) that it is not in order to establish any new doctrine, but as confirmatory and explanatory of those contained in the Scriptures, that the value of Tradition is urged. But, be it remembered, with regard both to traditional and interpretational *authority*, for that is the point:—

1st. That if they be limited in their powers, there is an end to them altogether.

2nd. If they cannot establish anything new, they are alike needless and superfluous.

If the claim of arbitrary interpretation or doctrinal tradition be once admitted in things not vitally important, we shall soon see them in the highest seat, dispensing with or otherwise controlling those that are. Above all things, we should be careful never to sow the seed of error.

But further; independently of the greater

difficulty of testing the authenticity of what is traditional than of what is written, Scripture has this higher claim—it is in itself and of itself complete. Our Lord, in proof of his mission, and the Apostles throughout their writings, constantly refer to the books of the Old Testament: and the Bereans are especially commended for searching the Scriptures, to see whether those things were so. Mr. Manning endeavours to escape from the force of that passage and example, by very briefly observing that the Bereans put a new doctrine to the test of the Old Scriptures, as if this were an answer, or anything but an evasion. The Bereans were at liberty to compare and test what the Apostles *did* say with the Scriptures which they had; and may we not do the same with that which the Apostles are only *reported* to have said? And by what light did the Bereans search the Scripture of the Old Testament? Were those Scriptures more clear and intelligible to them, without the aid of an interpreter, than the Scriptures of the New Testament are to us? When and how did the new Rule of Faith arise that thus distinguishes the Old from the New Testament—leaving the one open but sealing the other, or rather, in fact, sealing both—since the New Testament being explanatory of the Old, we must now read neither? Is the New Testament more obscure than the Old? If the

Old Testament were open to the Bereans and to all, where is the delegation by Scripture to the Church of an authority to interpret, taking away the right of private judgment once enjoyed and commendably exercised? And where the authoritative establishment of Tradition, coupled with the New Testament, which our Lord with his own lips reprobated, as making the Scriptures of the Old of none effect?

In commenting on another passage "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures," &c., Mr. Manning thinks it enough to show that it was impossible this could mean the Scriptures of the New Testament, since not one portion of them had then been written.

But the real argument is untouched. Timothy had been instructed in, and from childhood had known, the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament; which, says St. Paul, are able to make wise unto salvation. Where is the prohibition as to those of the New Testament? Where is it declared of them that they are not, or of the Old Testament that it has ceased to be, or of the whole volume—for now the whole must be embraced—that it is not able to do that which the Scriptures of the Old Testament were wont to do?

In one respect it is quite impossible that Antiquity can be a sufficient guide, viz. the inter-

pretation of prophecy, and its application to events then foretold, and since come to pass. Yet this is one of the great evidences of Christianity. There is so much of fallacy and of dangerous error too, involved in Mr. Manning's position, "that the interpretations of Scripture must be made in accordance with the faith of those on whose evidence we receive the written Word," that I must beg to offer a little illustration of it. Apply the maxim generally, and see the result. If the position be true, it should be universal. The opinion of the attesting witness is to determine the meaning of a will or other instrument. The servant who brings a note, and tells you whence he brings it, is to be your instructor as to its meaning. The Jews, who are our best witnesses as to the authenticity of the Old Testament, must be accepted as our guides in the interpretation of it. But what is to be done when different witnesses give differing interpretations? We may then, I suppose, judge for ourselves.

As a plain illustration, let me suppose a direction-post, with a person stationed under it to tell travellers seeking their way not to trust their eyes or the language of the direction, for he had heard the person who put it up say, or had heard that he had said, that the places mentioned lay each in a different direction.

With what object is the authority of Tradition

to be established—is it to confirm or alter our faith?

Is it intended to be said that the meaning which would be suggested to a candid and humble-minded reader of Scripture, without other aid than that which prayer to the Author of it would ensure, must certainly or probably be opposed to that of the Church? Such an assertion would involve rather a fearful charge on the Inspirer of the Apostles, that the Scriptures were so written under his guidance that a man reading them in the spirit recommended in their pages *and by the Church, their authorised interpreter*, is the one least likely to attain the benefit intended.

Towards the close of the Appendix, some instances are brought to illustrate and establish the value of universal consent in fixing the right interpretation of Holy Scripture. They are three in number.

First, Rom. ix. 5. The objection of the Socinians is fourfold. 1st, That the word “God” is not found in many manuscripts. This is a question of fact, and, whichever way decided, (though, as in all such cases, the Socinians are in error,) has nothing to do with the present subject. 2d, That the last words are a doxology to the Father, a point for any scholar to decide without being a theologian; for it turns upon the proper rendering of the original in the translation. 3d, They

suggest another translation—the answer, therefore, is the same: and, 4th, They break away from criticism, and assert that the Fathers did not cite it to prove the Divinity of Christ; and so many of them are referred to, to prove that they did. But this being necessary (if at all) only to refute an assertion of the Socinians, is no more relevant to the question at issue than any other disputed matter of fact.

How then does this establish the position that universal consent is necessary to fix the right meaning of Scripture? It seems to me to have really no bearing at all upon it.

The Second is Rom. viii. 30. The word “glorified,” Mr. Manning says, is interpreted by Calvinists and Arminians alike of the future glory of the elect, whereas, by Antiquity, it was universally understood of their present glory. I have looked into six commentators of different opinions as it respects the Calvinistic and Arminian views, and there appears to be no greater difference between them and the writers of antiquity quoted by Mr. Manning, than there is between those writers of antiquity themselves. Nor can I find that the construction put upon the passage in question is that broadly stated by Mr. Manning. But suppose it were, what would be gained? Suppose that instead of there being various interpretations of the word “glorified,”

all writers of antiquity concurred in their declaration of its exact meaning. No one disputes the liberty or expediency of referring to Antiquity, for the aid it may afford, any more than of a reference to the writers of the purest Greek, to ascertain the exact meaning and proper translation of any word in that language. But what approach does this make to the establishment of the authority of the Fathers on an equality with the Holy Scriptures?

Here are two out of the three instances that Mr. Manning has produced.

The third is nothing more or less than the Baptismal Controversy, arising out of the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. Into this I certainly shall not enter here. But I must be allowed to say that the statement of it is arbitrary, and unfair, because imperfect; and therefore the reference is as unsatisfactory as some others contained in the Appendix; such, for instance, as to Archbishop Usher.

And these are the best three examples to be found in the whole Bible of the value of universal consent in fixing the right interpretation of Holy Scripture. They are altogether beside the point: it was idle to produce them; but what was to be done without something of the kind?

While on the subject of Scripture, as thus referred to by Mr. Manning, I must continue

the digression yet a little, just to notice another passage referred to by him, viz. chap. ii. verse 2, of the prophet Habbakuk: "Write the vision," &c., which, it is said, means not that all who run may be able to read it, but that all who read may be readily obedient. We should be puzzled to find the authority of universal antiquity for this, which is, in reality, only another attempt to escape from the force of a text that cannot be answered. But in whatever way the passage be interpreted, the inference is the same. Understanding is necessary to obedience; and the writing was to be made so plain that it should be readily understood.

Connected with this, however, there is a suggestion at page 91 as to the promise of spiritual guidance, relating rather to the moral than the intellectual nature. The Gospel, Mr. Manning says truly, may be received in all literal correctness by the Infidel, whom we cannot believe to be taught of the Spirit. True: but how can there be a moral without an intellectual nature? The intellect may be taught without any effect on the heart or affections; but how can they be instructed aright without the intervention and aid of the intellect? I notice this more particularly, as indicative of the system. The prostration of the intellect is a part of the system of Popery, which leads men in the dark; and the

whole tendency (I do not say the design) of the argument of Mr. Manning's work is to this end.

Man is addressed throughout Scripture as at once an intellectual being and a moral agent, his moral responsibility rising in proportion to the increase of light vouchsafed to him. Every Christian privilege comes charged like the thunder cloud. The wisdom of man is to welcome, and seek to profit by all.

Mr. Manning relies much on the antiquity of the Creed (the Apostle's Creed, as it is called). But antiquity alone is not enough. There are Apocryphal Books more ancient than this Creed. And the argument proves too much; for if the Creed be as old as the oral teaching of the Apostles, and in exact conformity with it, more ancient therefore than any of their writings, how happens it to have been excluded from the Canon of Scripture, not recognized by it, or referred to in it, if it were to be of equal authority therewith? Any reference to it *there* would have stamped it with the impress of Heaven, and made it current coin in the Church of Christ throughout all ages. The absence of all such sanction, all reference in Scripture to anything but itself, is that which cannot be overcome. The Word of God, accompanied by his Spirit, is the appointed light and guide of the people of God in every age. We behold the Church, indeed, like the

moon, walking in brightness; but she can shine only as she borrows and reflects the light of the Word, the Sun of Righteousness. It is not the fact, however, that the Creed, as received in our Church, is as old as the time of the Apostles; which circumstance, with its history, will show its right use. Of the Twelve Articles of which it is composed, there is not one that has not undergone some alteration. In the first the words “Maker of Heaven and Earth” have been added. In the second, there is a variation between it and the same Creed as used in the Greek Church, where the word “begotten” is introduced. The third formerly ran, born of the Holy Ghost *and* the Virgin Mary. The fourth has been altered by the accession of the word “suffered.” In the fifth, the descent into hell was added after about *four hundred* years. The sixth, by the addition of the name of God, and the attribute Almighty. In the seventh the variation is slight, yet still there has been some in regard to the *coming* to judgment. The eighth is disputed by Tertullian (great authority with Mr. Manning) altogether. The ninth has been altered in substance and position. The tenth in position only. The eleventh is altered in some versions. And the twelfth is found only in some. How does this correspond with and approve the maxim

so often referred to as that which is the basis and the test of Tradition,—that it must be acknowledged to be the same always, everywhere, and by all? And yet this Creed is the only record put forth as having, or that can be found with, any pretensions to antiquity and authority from Tradition. But is this all? Is it only in the alterations of this Creed that we learn the uncertainty and insufficiency of all that is not divine? Why so incomplete has it proved to be, and so incapable of answering its original end and design, that it has been found necessary to add two more Creeds, which are in constant use in the Church? Yet who has found it necessary, or, however it may have been desired, who has dared thus to invade the Holy Scriptures? Let us bless God, then, that we have them in all their original purity, and a Reformed Church as a witness and keeper of that Word. Far be it from me to seek to undervalue her: she is of all but inestimable worth,—of all but incomparable beauty. But her beauty and her worth are those of a bride; her wisdom and her joy must be to listen to the bridegroom's voice.

Great stress is laid on the Creed, and an attempt is made to establish, by its antiquity, the authority of the Church as a Rule of Faith. But that very Creed was in an early age commended by Cyril because of its agreement with

the Scriptures, to which he refers for its sanction, (in the form in which he possessed it,) deprecating the idea of its having in itself any authority whatever. Why is it not enough now, as in the time of Cyril, and afterwards of our own Reformers, to sustain the Creed as being agreeable to the Scriptures, without exalting it to the throne of the Scriptures? One feels as we read, that there must be something behind all this, and so there is. It has struck me forcibly, in reading Mr. Manning's Appendix, that the allusions to the Roman Church are very mild.

Against what Mr. Manning calls the new Rule of Faith, he objects that while the Church of Rome has brought in many new doctrines, this has taken many away. And now let us see what they are.

1. The Real Presence, as distinguished from Transubstantiation. This is no doctrine of the Church of England. It is plainly contradicted by the very definition of a Sacrament in the Catechism of the Church, as also by the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy. Whether it be called the carnal presence, or the real presence, or transubstantiation, or consubstantiation, it matters not. In any form it is not the doctrine of the Church of England. The note subjoined to the service for the Communion in the Book of

Common Prayer is expressly to the point, and worthy of all attention.

As Mr. Manning has quoted Archbishop Usher, he may be again referred to without apology.

“ Are not the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament ?

“ No, they are not changed in nature, but in use (1 Cor. x. 16). For the words of eating and drinking do properly belong to the outward elements of bread and wine, and by a borrowed speech do improperly belong to the Body and Blood of Christ, to note unto us the communion we have with our Saviour Christ, of whom we are verily partakers by a lively faith ; as of bread and wine, by eating and drinking them. And thus we say, that these elements are changed in use ; because, being separated from a common use, they are consecrate to sign and seal unto us our spiritual nourishment and growth by the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus. (Luke xxii. 19 ; 1 Cor. x. 3, 4). For as the Sacrament of Baptism doth seal to us a spiritual regeneration, so the Lord’s Supper is a spiritual feeding ; and even as well the Body and Blood of Christ is in Baptism given us for clothing, as they are given in the Lord’s Supper for nourishment. Therefore, the bread and wine are not the true Body and Blood of Christ, but the signs and tokens of them ; as in Baptism, the water was only a sign of Christ’s blood, not the Blood.

“ What further reasons have you to overthrow the carnal presence of Christ in the Sacrament ?

“ 1. If the bread were turned into Christ, there should be two Christs—one that giveth, another that is given, for our Saviour Christ gave the bread, &c.

“ 2. If the bread be the very body of Christ, there should then be no sign of the thing signified, and so no Sacrament. (Rom. iv. 11.)

“ 3. The wicked receiver might then eat and drink Christ’s Body and Blood, as well as any true believer. (John xiii. 2, 30.)

“ 4. The minister cannot give the inward grace, but the outward element in the administration of the Sacrament. (Luke iii. 16.)”*

Baptismal regeneration, Apostolical succession, and the visible unity of the Church, are the other three named. None of these being asserted in the Articles of the Church, or taught in her services, and Baptismal regeneration in its *full* import being a matter of doubt at least, as well as of angry discussion, I do not see how much is to be gained for the Church, by asserting her to be a Rule of Faith in these respects. I believe the teaching of the Church of England, in regard to Baptism, to be quite Scriptural, but not assuredly in the sense adopted by some modern writers.†

* Sum and Substance of the Christian Religion, p. 425.

† I cannot but think that if the language of the Church in her Catechism were duly attended to, and the services read in conjunction with it, and as a commentary upon them, there would well-nigh be an end to that controversy.

In regard to the Apostolical succession, I may say, without offence I hope to any, that it is a subject surrounded with difficulty. The proof of the *fact* is defective and unsatisfactory. And how the two points of *Ministerial* administration of the Sacrament of Baptism and Apostolical succession can be maintained in the teeth of history and acknowledged facts, I am at a loss to understand.

And now, on what ground is it asserted by Mr. Manning of the Church of England, that she holds every doctrine of the Gospel upon the joint authority of the Scriptures and Universal Tradition; and that he does not scruple to say that a denial of this (the union of these two) undermines the foundation upon which Christianity itself is built; which, if there be meaning in words, the Church of England does deny in passages that have been already quoted? And because the doctrines of the Real Presence, which has neither genuine antiquity nor Scripture to support it; Baptismal regeneration, which in his sense of it must lean upon Tradition against Scripture; Apostolical *succession*, which, as distinct from the form of Episcopal government and any question of ecclesiastical polity, must be admitted to be of very doubtful historical proof; and the visible unity of the Church, of which, till it is better explained, I can only say that I am afraid it is properly a Roman Catholic tenet; because these are, as Mr. Manning says, lost by the denial of the Scriptures and Tradition as of equal and joint authority in matters of Faith; therefore the foundations of Faith and of Christianity itself are undermined. Contrast this for a moment with the declarations of the Apostle. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. I determined to know nothing at all among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am free from the blood of all, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God: viz. by testifying publicly, and from house to house, both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Talk, indeed, of the inability of the unlearned to understand the Scriptures without the aid of Tradition to interpret. How immeasurably is the difficulty increased by it! Where are they to seek, and how are they to understand it? Thus the Scripture is dethroned—the spring of life is dried up—there is a famine of the Word of the Lord. The reading of the Bible, *if it be not forbidden*, will be forsaken, for men will despair of reading it to any good purpose, not knowing where to find Tradition, or learn the interpretation of the Church; or, on finding them, discover that what is taught is either not contained in the Scriptures, or at variance with it. *This* is to undermine the foundations of Faith—to teach such doctrines as have just been referred to as essential and fundamental, instead of those which are declared in the Gospel, and pronounced by

our Lord, and preached by his Apostles as such. But the Bible is the property of all. Each man's soul is his own. The charter of Protestantism, and the birthright of every child of man, is the privilege to open the Bible, and read therein for himself the way of God's salvation. Education is not excluded. The social and relative duties are not superseded. All useful reference to the writings of the Fathers, the Creeds of the Church, and whatever else may be profitably studied, is allowed and recommended. The preaching of the Gospel is continued. In short, everything that may avail—all the means that the Church, and every member of it, can use to convert a sinner from the error of his way, are to be employed: only in conformity with, and in subjection to, the truth of the living God; not usurping his prerogative, which if you give to man in any form or degree, as we have seen in time past, so we shall soon see again what fantastic tricks he will play before high Heaven.

The reading of the Scriptures is an obligation upon every man according to his ability, which nothing can unbind. An unlearned man reading and believing the declarations of God in his Word, venturing his soul on the Redeemer as the rock of his Salvation, and striving in honest simplicity of purpose, by the help of his Spirit, sought in prayer, to be conformed to his image,

and to tread in his steps, shall be safe for ever ; though there be parts of each of the Creeds that he may not understand ; nor can he be made to comprehend how he undermines the foundations of Christianity, because he has no knowledge, and desires none, of what is meant by Universal Tradition.

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